

JEEVADHARA

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THE PILGRIM CHURCH

PNEUMATOLOGY : ORIENTAL v. WESTERN,
HORIZONTAL v. VERTICAL

John B. Chethimattam

A HISTORICO - ECCLESIOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHALDEAN CHURCH

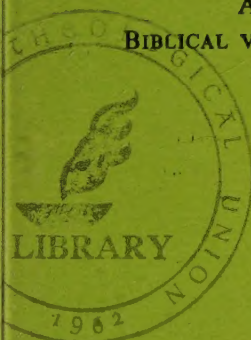
Geevarghese Chediath

AUTHORITY AND ITS EXERCISE -
BIBLICAL v. WESTERN AND ORIENTAL PERSPECTIVES

J. C. Manalel

JERUSALEM OR ROME ?
Thomas Vellilamthadam

BOOK REVIEWS



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THE PILGRIM CHURCH

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Editorial

The Church of God is on her march to the Lord of creation through time and space. This pilgrim aspect creates an eschatological tension which inspires her to become alert and alive in all her activities. This tension saves her also from any kind of exclusive identification with any particular culture, place or period. She is in time but her goal is beyond it. This inner dynamism of involvement and detachment constitutes her very being which is both human and divine.

The Church is visible in her societal aspect and invisible in her divine aspect. The societal life of the Church gives her the marks of the age in which she exists and by which she is influenced. But she transcends it as her role can never be narrowed down to any particular socio-politico-cultural set up. The history of the Church reveals her successes and failures in this process and her struggle to maintain her identity among the various challenges of the time. In her attitude to the society one can observe an element of involvement and detachment. Her detachment is not running away from the problems of the society but an attempt to find out her own role for a greater and more meaningful involvement in the life of the society. Her successes and failures in this process constitute her history.

In this issue of *Jeevadhara* J.B. Chethimattam points out the characteristics of the pneumatology of the Oriental versus Western i. e. horizontal versus vertical dimensions. The pneumatological emphasis of the Eastern Fathers has always been an unfailing source of inspiration for the ecclesiological investigations of the subsequent generations. The juridical emphasis which paved the way for the various organizational developments and forces of exaggerated centralization in the West is a clear departure from the Eastern pneumatological vision of the Church.

The study on the origin and development of the Chaldean Church by Geevargheese Chediath who is a patrologist, focuses our attention on the nature of a Church which existed outside the Roman empire. Its existence outside the Roman Empire

which was its rival, kept her free from the imperial influence of the Roman world. Moreover, the Chaldean Church with its Mesopotamian background brings home to us the heritage of the ancient Sumerian culture. This culture has its profound affinity with the Pre-Aryan culture of India, known as the Indus valley civilization which is Dravidian. Because of this Indo-Mesopotamian cultural affinity (which is Dravidian) the Churches in India and Mesopotamia which owe their origin to St Thomas one of the twelve apostles of Christ, accepted the same liturgy. The Indians did not consider it foreign to their Indian cultural genius.

J. C. Manalel dwells on the nature of authority in the Church as revealed by Jesus in the gospels and sidelighted by Paul's doctrine of charisms and freedom, and collates it with Western and Oriental perspectives and practice in order to see how far we have approached the ideal set before us by Jesus. It is a must to go back to the sources in prayerful contemplation for new light and life, and to correct aberrations in the march to the final goal.

The article by Thomas Vellilamthadom makes a brief survey of the various forces which have influenced the Roman Church. It invites our attention to make the necessary distinction to find out what is essential and what is accidental in the Church. The strange alliance between the European culture and the Roman Church has to be properly evaluated for projecting the true image of the Church of God.

The sociological evolution of the Church is conditioned by various factors. An analysis of them are essential to understand and appreciate the true nature and structure of the Church established by Jesus Christ. The Church is fully involved in human history as did God Himself in our history through Incarnation. The Risen Lord stands behind the visible reality of the Church and sustains her so that she may not fail to play her role as a sacred sign.

Pneumatology: Oriental v. Western, Horizontal v. Vertical

The role of the Holy Spirit in the Church as described by Vatican II in its constitution *Lumen Gentium* presents us with a certain paradox: In \neq 4 He is described as the one through whom the Father gives life to men who are dead from sin. He dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple, guides the Church into the fullness of truth, furnishes her with various gifts both hierarchical and charismatic, makes her grow, perpetually renews her and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse, acting as the transcendent divine principle. In \neq 7 the Spirit is described as the vital principle communicated by Christ "to his brothers called together from all peoples making them mystically into his own body". These two views of the Spirit belong to two distinct traditions of pneumatology, defying a synthesis and representing different ecclesiologies as well. The first view represents a Graeco-Roman tradition with a vertical conception of the action of the Spirit coming to man from above, while the latter corresponds more to the Semitic, Eastern Christian and Indian understanding of the Spirit as forming the inner and integral core of human existence.

The Mantic Pneumatology of the Greeks

View of the Spirit as an overpowering force acting on man from the outside and taking full control of his whole being, gained prominence in Mantism. It was a pre-Greek cult of the god in Asia Minor. This deity later got identified with the Greek god Appollo, who filled Pithia the Delphic priestess with his divine breath making her utterances accepted by people as the voice of God. Sitting on a tripod with splayed out thighs she receives in her womb the generative pneuma, coming out through a cleft in the earth below her, and in this sort of divine marriage she became pregnant with the divine voice. Thus the earlier vague ideas of the Pneuma as wind, storm, breath, life and soul, and even the Stoic idea of spirit as a universal cosmic power, was personified into a powerful corporeal entity with an over-

powering force acting in special circumstances on special people like poets, musicians, and political leaders.

Plato often mentions this pneumatic phenomenon as a generally accepted fact. Thus the poet under inspiration becomes "a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired and is beside himself, and reason is no longer in him".¹

Herein is a proof that God has given the art of divination not to the wisdom, but to the foolishness of man. No man, when in his wits, attains prophetic truth and inspiration, but when he receives the inspired word, either his intelligence is enthralled in sleep or he is demented by some distemper or possession².

The well aimed conjectures of statesmen are said to be no different from that of prophets and tellers of oracles, "who under divine inspiration utter many truths, but have no knowledge of what they are saying".³ In his *Symposium* Plato places the best description of beauty and of the education of men in the appreciation of beauty in the mouth of Diotyma, designated as a Mantic priestess.

Even in the books of the New Testament, not to mention the different traditions of prophetism in the Old Testament, we find traces of this ecstatic character of the pneumatic phenomenon. The statement of the Book of Revelations: "The Spirit and the Bride say; come" (Rev. 22:17) evokes the image of the Mantic marriage between the Spirit and the human medium. St. Peter says: "No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21). But there are certain fundamental differences between the Biblical idea of the movement of the Spirit and the Greek idea of pneumatic inspiration: (1) The constitutive factor of the Greek *pneuma* is subtle and powerful corporeality, while the Biblical

1. Plato. *Ion* 534 b

2. *Timaeus* 71 e

3. *Meno* 99c-d; *Phaedr.* 244 a; *Apology* 22 c

Spirit is a divine principle outside the realm of sense. (2) The N. T. books carefully avoid the ecstatic and enthusiastic aspect and all terms connected with it, which predominate in the Mantic pneumatism. (3) The Bible emphasizes divine presence and activity in the created realm, while the Greek interest is mostly theoretical and aetiological, namely, to communicate to man an esoteric message. Hence the role of the spirit in Mantism is mostly mediatorial and impersonal. In short we can say that the Greek *pneuma* stops at the point where it breaks from the etymological origin of the word as breath and wind.

The Critical Task

Besides, both Plato and St. Paul stress the need to discern the spirits since there is possibility of deception. According to Plato one who is overpowered by the pneumatic force "cannot judge of visions he sees or the words he utters". Hence there is need for proper interpreters to be judges of true inspirations, though they themselves cannot be considered prophets.⁴ These impartial judges will assure that "prophecy will be real knowledge of the future and will be under the control of wisdom".⁵ For St. Paul the ability to distinguish between spirits is a special charism like that of prophecy, miracles and the gift of tongues.⁶ According to him the real pneumatic phenomenon is not a blind force but one that teaches imparting knowledge parallel to and surpassing human wisdom, and it helps to "interpret spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit".⁷ His advice to the Church that had members enjoying such charisms of the Spirit was, not to suppress such gifts, but to "test everything and hold fast to what is good".⁸

The Spirit in the Early Church: Tension between Charismatic and Administrative Elements

In the beginning the Church did not exercise any considerable political influence in society. Christianity was the small and unobtrusive movement confined to small communities led by charismatic individuals. Their principal problems were how

4. *Timaeus* 72 a-b,

6. *1 Cor.* 12: 10.

8. *1st Thess.* 5: 19-21

5. *Charmides* 173 c

7. *1 Cor.* 2: 13-15; 14: 29

to define, interpret, and communicate, the newly found faith in Jesus Christ, how to relate themselves to traditional Judaism and its practices, and how relate themselves to local political authority. In this post-Apostolic age we find three strands of pneumatism in the Graeco-Roman Church. One was the Gnostic line of thought which shared the Greek contempt for matter, body and suffering. Hence it conceived Christ as the eternal, authentic, spiritual Man of whom Adam and Jesus of Nazareth were only shadows. Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection were mere appearances. The authentic Church, therefore, had to be a spiritual reality. "Christ the Lord who saved us being spirit at first, became flesh and so called us", says the 2nd letter attributed to Clement of Rome.⁹ It adds further: "By doing the will of God our Father, we shall belong to the first church, the spiritual one established before the sun and the moon... The Church is not of the present time, but from the beginning."¹⁰ Though St. Ignatius of Antioch defends the real resurrection of the body against Gnosticism, regarding Christ and the Church he follows the Gnostic line of thinking. It is the union of spirit and flesh in Christ that makes, according to him, the resurrection of the flesh of the believer possible.¹¹

A second line of thinking places the emphasis on charismatic phenomena. Sometimes the Spirit is confused with the unusual phenomena themselves,¹² Extraordinary phenomena were considered the reward of faith: "Thus to all were granted a deep and radiant peace and an untiring longing to do good, and there came upon all an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit."¹³ The apostles set up bishops and deacons according to the manifestation of such phenomena, "after testing them by the Spirit", as Moses appointed Aaron's tribe for priestly ministry after the miraculous flowering of Aaron's rod.¹⁴

The relative peace and the means of easy communication provided by the Roman empire slowly brought the christian communities and their heads to public notice and slowly they

9. *II Clem.* 9, 5

11. *Letter to Eph.* 7, 2; *Magn* 1, 2

12. *Hermas. Pastor.* 1, 1, 3; 2; 1, 1

13. *I Clem.* 2, 2.

10. *II Clem.* 14, 1-3

14. *I Clem.* 42. 4

gained political prominence. Then rivalries arose in the election of bishops and their functioning in their office. Thus Clement of Rome felt impelled to intervene in the Church of Corinth where the legitimately constituted bishop was thrown out by his rivals.¹⁵ In defending the legitimate rights of such individuals attention is focussed on the special charism received by the bishop through ordination.¹⁶ Though nobody denied other charisms of the Spirit enjoyed also by other members of the Church, less and less attention was paid to them in the eagerness to defend ecclesiastical authority and organization. This exaggerated emphasis on the assured possession of the Spirit by ecclesiastical authority was a natural reaction to those like Tertullian who opposed the Church of the Spirit to the hierarchical Church and denied to the latter the authority to remit capital crimes.¹⁷

St. Ignatius of Antioch in all his letters emphasizes the authority of the bishop and the absolute need for others to be subordinate to him: "It was the Spirit that proclaimed these words: Apart from the bishop let nothing be done."¹⁸ The bishop and the ecclesiastical administration assumed for him an importance on the same level as that of the Eucharist: One Eucharist, one body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one chalice in the unity of his blood, just as one bishop with priests and deacons.¹⁹ No longer was the one whom God appointed through the endowment of the Spirit ordained to the ministry, but rather the one who was rightly instituted into office was now supposed to be granted the Spirit of God. Unity with the Bishop, whoever he be, is considered necessary on the same line as the unity of body and spirit, and as unity in faith and charity and unity in the Son and the Father and the Spirit, "so that whatever you do may prosper".²⁰ St. Irenaeus goes to the extent of stating that with the episcopal succession the bishops received the charism of certain truth.²¹

15. *I Clem.* 43, 4

16. *I Tim.* 4: 14; *2 Tim.* 1: 6

17. Tertullian. *De Pudicitia* 22. *PL* 2, 1026

18. *Letter to Philadel.* 7, 1, 2.

19. *Ibid.* 4

20. *Letter to Magn.* 13. 1

21. *Against the Heretics.* IV, 26, 2

The Fathers were, certainly, aware of the other gifts of the Spirit in the body of the Church. The Church is like the garment of Christ even from the fringes of which the power of the Spirit flowed out. But more and more the attention turned to the unity of the garment. To the Apostles were given the power, flowing out as it were from the same body, and the same power was further made available to those who wished to come in contact with the same body.²² For, though the power is present in some manner in the whole body, still it is communicated through certain nerve centres and principal organs, so that, even if some corrupt members dead through vices have to be cut away, the body may still retain its life force.²³ Yet, it is the one Christ and the one Spirit that operates in all and distributes all the gifts.²⁴ St. Ambrose finds a certain parallelism between the unity of each church centered in the Spirit that invisibly fills it, and the external, visible organization centered in the figure of the bishop.²⁵ St. Jerome inveighs against the heretics who pretend to hold the unity of the Spirit after dissipating and corrupting the unity of the Church, since only in the bonds of peace can the unity of the Spirit be maintained, according to St. Paul's statement in Eph. 4:3-4. Such people do not receive the Spirit, but only the impressions of their own imagination and their own opinion.²⁶ This rightful preoccupation with heresies, schisms and conflicts in the Church made the Fathers sometimes to deny the Spirit completely in those who are outside the visible organism of the Church like the heretics and Jews.²⁷

The Semitic Understanding of the Spirit

The Hebrews had a more integral vision of the Spirit than the Greeks. *Ruha* or *Ruah* which was usually translated by the Greek word *Pneuma*²⁸ was an aspect of the whole man as he

22. St. Hilary. *Comment. in Matt.* 14, 19, PL 9, 1003

23. Hilary. *Treat. in Psalm* 118, PL 9, 629-630

24. Hilary. *De Trinit.* VIII, 31-32 PL 10, 259-61

25. St. Ambrose. *Expos. in Luke.* II: 7; PL 15: 1555; St. Bede, *In Lc* I: 2; PL 92: 330

26. St. Jerome. *Comment. in Eph.* II: 4: 3-4 PL 26, 494-96

27. St. Augustine. *Serm.* 71 PL 38:447-48

was in communion with God, just as he was *nepesh* or a psyche in communion with himself and *basar*, flesh by his communion with the material world. *Pneuma* is the breath of life. It is not from man (2 Macc. 7: 22) but from God (Job. 27:3). Though man can take the *pneuma* away from others or give it up himself, he cannot bring it back (Wis. 16: 14). *Pneuma* in a way belong to the very constitution of the soul (Ex. 28: 3; Job. 32: 8). It is also man's final authentic form that will be restored when the Lord will have washed away the filth and cleansed the bloodstains (Is. 4: 4; 32: 15). Hence it was never considered an enthralling and overpowering force, coming from above or outside. According to Haggai once the temple community is purified the Spirit of the Lord abides the people (Hag. 2:5). It is a sharing in the incorruptibility of God himself (Wis. 12:1). Even though one loses the breath of life by death, the just gain a share in the incorruptibility of God (Wis. 5:15; 2:23).

The East Syrian Church which was mostly outside the sphere of Byzantine political hegemony escaped the struggles for authority, power and influence that deeply affected the theological thought of the Graeco-Roman Church. Hence its pneumatology continued the Semitic thinking and dealt with the Spirit of God more on the horizontal plane than in an upward looking ecclesiastical structure. As the decrees and statements of the councils of the East Syrian Church clearly show that the East Syrian Bishops assumed a paternal role and represented a spiritual leadership and left administrative matters mostly in the hands of archdeacons and other minor officials. Ecclesiastical authority never had any political importance, any way, in the Persian kingdom.

The Holy Spirit and his activities and gifts are viewed in the context of the totality of Christian life. Christian life itself is viewed in its ordinariness, as the sum total of things Christians are called upon to do, fasting, alms-giving, visiting the sick, loving one's brethren, attending church, praying, worshipping God and the like, which St. Ephrem compares to the various seemingly trivial activities builders have to undertake in order to put up a magnificent edifice. One cannot neglect

them, nor be ashamed to perform them in front of others.²⁸ In this life of the Christian the Holy Spirit is like the architect who provides the blue print and directs the work in setting upright the building that has collapsed through sin.²⁹ The work of the Spirit immediately after the Ascension of Christ was to convert and confirm those who had fallen away from faith on account of Christ's death.³⁰ He made the power of Christ to dwell in the Apostles, so that they could work miracles in his name.³¹ The Holy Spirit is a sort of pledge, a guarantee we have received for our eternal salvation. Often he is called "the pledge of life": "He sent to them (men) from his own divine nature a true pledge, the Spirit the Paraclete, the pledge of life".³² St. Aphraates also emphasizes the same idea: "Our Lord took from us a pledge (i. e. the human body) and departed; and he left for us a pledge from himself (the Spirit) and was taken up."³³ He points out that the Holy Spirit was the most excellent gift God could send us.³⁴

These same ideas are present in Western pneumatology also. But what is important is that in the Semitic and East Syrian pneumatology the Spirit is not particularly linked to ecclesiastical administration, as if only in union and communion with it others could receive the Spirit. The Spirit is present in every phase and aspect of Christian life as the inner source of its inspiration and strength. St. Ephrem speaks to Christ in his hymn on faith:

Behold Fire and Spirit in the womb of thy mother;
 behold Fire and Spirit in the river in which you were
 baptized; Fire and Spirit in our baptism; Fire and
 Spirit in the Bread and in the chalice.³⁵

28. In the LXX version of O. T. *Ruah* is translated 277 times as *Pneuma*, 52 times as *anemos*, 6 times as *thumos* and 14 times as *pnoe*.

29. St. Ephrem. *Exposition on the Gospel* I: 25

30. *Ibid* 22: 1

31. *Ibid*

32. *Ibid*. 21: 33

33. *Demonstr. 6 Patrol. Syriaca* I: 277-80

34. *Demonstr. 23 Patrol. Syriaca* II: 97

35. Hymn X: 17

The Holy Spirit is in our faith: When our faith is presented to the Spirit he sanctifies and forms it into the all holy Mystery (*rāza*).³⁶ The Holy Spirit is in our penance: "When our spirit repents it is stamped by the Father, and when the soul suffers it is united completely to the Son, and when the body confesses and suffers it is completely suffused with the Holy Spirit."³⁷

Perhaps the most important difference between Western and Eastern pneumatologies is in the specific role assigned to the Spirit. In the Graeco-Roman thought the Spirit is masculine principle conquering the resistance of the female creation and making it pregnant with divine fruitfulness. Just like Yahweh in the Old Testament, in Western theological thought both Christ the redeemer and the Spirit, the sanctifier, are conquerors vanquishing sin and death. But in the Semitic and Oriental thinking the Spirit is assigned a feminine and maternal role. In creation the Spirit hovers over the primeval waters like a mother bird brooding over its eggs. As St. Ephrem states in one of his inimitable hymns, the Holy Spirit, the divine dove comes down on the church and carries aloft on her wings the faithful. The Spirit dwells in the church and makes the spiritual benefits appear as it were from within. The Chaldean divine office sings on the day of Pentecost:

By the advent of the Holy Spirit, the world was filled with grace; the sins of men were forgiven through baptism; the needy received good hope, the foolish were enlightened, the sick cured, and the dead received the hope of light... The holy apostles were filled with the knowledge of God and by diverse tongues they brought all nations and generations into true faith.

The Indian Concept of the Atman

Very close to the Semitic and Syrian understanding of the Spirit as an internal, maternal principle is the Hindu idea of the Atman. Opposed to Brahman, the ultimate cosmic principle, but in reality identical with it is the Atman, the inner self of all things. It is the original reality which uttered the

36. Hymn XIII, 2

37. Hymn XVIII, 5

initial "I am" and by its will and desire produced all things.³⁸ It is the inner core of all, the Real of all real. Hence "it is the Atman that should be seen, that should be hearkened to, that should be thought on, that should be reflected upon", Yajna-vaikya, the vedic sage exhorts his wife Maitreyi, who seeks to discover the authentic reality of human life.³⁹ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad uses an analogy to explain the point: To understand the beating of a drum or the blowing of a conch or the playing of a Veena it is not enough to analyze the sound that is heard; one has to understand first the drum or the conch or the veena from which the sound emerges. So also, only by understanding the Atman can one understand the things that emerge from that inner self.⁴⁰

From creation till final liberation everything is rooted in the one inner self: "That which is the finest essence - this whole world has as its Atman. That is Reality. That is Atman."⁴¹ "In the beginning all this was *asat* (non-existence); from that came *sat* (existence). That made itself the Atman", says the Taittiriya Upanishad.⁴² Hence the proper way for understanding the world and one's own life is to look within one's own heart and discover therein that which is smaller than the smallest and yet greater than the greatest, and resides in the heart of every being.⁴³ For, "the One who is hard to see, entered into the inner secret space and dwells in the depth of the primeval. By considering him as God, through the yogic study of the Atman, the wise man gets beyond joy and sorrow".⁴⁴ "As oil in the sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river beds and as fire in the friction sticks, so is the Atman apprehended in one's own soul, if one looks for him with true *tapas*", says the Svetasvatara Upanishad.⁴⁵

The origin of the concept of Atman in Hindu tradition may be somewhat different from that of the Spirit in the Semitic and Christian traditions. But it serves the same purpose in

38. *Brih. Up.* I: 4-5; *Ait. Up.* I: 1

39. *Brih. Up.* II: 4, 5 40. *Brih. Up.* II: 4, 4-10

41. *Chand. Up.* VI, 8: 6 42. *Taitt. Up.* II, 7

43. *Kath. Up.* II, 20 44. *Kath. Up.* II, 12

45. *Svet. Up.* I, 15

the spiritual quest. It is the experience and recognition of the divine ground of one's own being. The whole Hindu spirituality is centered in the experience of the Atman who is at the same time the inner controller of one's life as well as the ontological source of all reality. If the body can be pictured as a chariot, the intellect is the charioteer, senses are the horses, the mind the reins; but the Atman is in the place of the one who rides in the chariot, and everything else draws its meaning and purpose from that Self.⁴⁶ According to Brihadaranyaka Upanishad morality and laws were instituted to organize the different classes of men in a way conformable to the inner reality of man. Hence man's life task in this world is not to accomplish certain assignments or to produce anything new or to create and achieve a non-existent goal, but rather to make the world a truly human world hospitable to all men, to conform the outside world of multiplicity and conflict to the unity and harmony of one's inner world centred in the divine Atman.

The Two Ecclesiologies

The conceptions of the Church based on the two radically different pneumatologies are somewhat fundamentally different in orientation and emphasis. Western ecclesiology places the emphasis on control, organization and administration, and is oriented towards the attainment of a definite goal, establishment of God's Kingdom on earth almost parallel to the political empire built up by the Romans. Oriental ecclesiology, on the other hand, with nothing like the Roman empire to compete with, placed the accent on making everyone realize the presence of the Spirit in the Church and share more and more in its inner life, the one life of Christ.

Much has been made of the shift made in the *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II in the order of the chapters on the Hierarchy and on the People of God, giving precedence to the latter over the former. But, in fact, there was no shift in the traditional ecclesiological thinking of the West which always ascribed priority to the hierarchy over the people. What was actually done was to establish a certain parallelism between the divine hierarchy of the Holy Trinity and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

46. *Kath. Up*, I. 3 : 3

St. Cyprian's statement that the Church is made one with the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit brings out the whole plan: Just as the organizing activities of first the Father and then of the Son and then finally of the Holy Spirit forms all men into one people on pilgrimage to an eschatological fulfilment, so also the administrative and sanctificative functions of the Pope, Bishops and priests are intended to call together all men into one authentic human family, the well organized body of the Church.

The Church is conceived more in objective, juridical, institutional terms than in terms of the life it embodies. The Father "planned" it; Jesus Christ "founded" it, and the Holy Spirit "built" it up. It is a perfect society with definite goals, rules and conditions for membership, and a well-defined government. It is the city built on a hill discernible to all by its distinctive characteristics: It is the one and undivided institute of salvation; it is only providing effective means of holiness; it is apostolic by an unbroken line of continuity with the primitive community of the disciples gathered together by Christ. It is catholic both intensively and extensively since it is intended to embrace and supernaturalize all that is good and noble, and also to include in its membership all men. It is the unique and universal institution of salvation with an infallible guarantee of all truth and the fullness of the means for sanctification with power both to forgive and withhold forgiveness of sins. Even expressions symbolizing spiritual authority like "keys of the Kingdom" and the gift of the Spirit to loosen and bind are often explained in a predominantly juridical meaning.

Hence the primary concern in this view is, on the one hand, to plant the Church and make it incarnate in every country and make it available to all men in every nation and region, and, on the other, to bring all men under its effective healing touch. As a perfect society it presents a parallel to the State, and a universally applicable code of laws and practical regulations and an effective penal system looks almost indispensable to the efficient functioning of the Church. The emphasis, therefore, on the supreme authority and infallible teaching charism of the Pope, the one and universal pastor and head, was a natural and inescapable conclusion from such an ecclesiology. Any denial of

his universal authority and any real possibility of his going wrong would be a denial of the salvific mission of the Church in the world.

Eastern ecclesiology, on the other hand, places the emphasis on the biological and psychological analogies. Even in the mystery of the Trinity of God the emphasis is not on the ineffable mystery of the one divine essence but rather on the Persons who form a community through their mutual self-gift in knowledge and love. On its model the church is conceived primarily as a fellowship in grace, faith and charity. The Incarnation and Pentecost effectively extend the divine personal relationships to embrace all men. Incarnation made the Son of God the son of man Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, keystone and capstone of our edifice of faith. His death and resurrection and the pouring out of his own Spirit on his disciples made the supernatural biological reality of the Church complete.

Wherever the Body of the Risen Lord is celebrated in the Eucharist the life-giving Spirit also communicates his grace and energy to human beings, and where there is the fullness of priestly power in the person of the Bishop there is the Church. As the Chaldean prayer repeatedly declares, "The Holy Spirit who came from God the true Father, sent out the groups of Apostles with the gift of grace, strengthened their minds with his Gospel, endowed these simple ones with the gift of diverse tongues, so that they might be ambassadors and preachers of the heavenly kingdom... Among his gifts he pours down prophecy and perfects the priests with his grace... and sustains by his power the wonderful order of the Church."⁴⁷

Baptizing new members and conferring on them the Holy Spirit and ordaining priests to handle the Body and Blood of Christ the Church, gathered around the altar under the leadership of the Bishop maintains and expands its own life. The authenticity of faith, life and worship is maintained by the communion of bishops among themselves in the apostolic college and with the Pope, the successor of Peter, the symbol and effective leader of the unity of the universal Church. Hence the universal Church is the communion of churches, and its unity of

47. The Chaldean Divine Office for Pentecost.

life is maintained more by the experience of the Spirit living and working in them, than by external coercion and mechanical conformity.

Conclusion: Two Models of Spirituality

The two pneumatologies represent also two divergent models of spirituality. The Graeco-Roman and Western Christian spirituality presents an upward looking model. Its basic pattern is presented by Plotinus in his oft repeated exhortation: Withdraw from the imperfect beauty of the material world into your own soul to contemplate its higher beauty, and from there ascend to the World Soul, and from there be assimilated to the Intelligence, the storehouse of all authentic ideas and to be finally united to the One. This upward movement through withdrawal, entry, ascent, assimilation, and union have been the main steps of the Western mystical ladder, which was almost completely assumed by Western Christian spirituality.

Semitic spirituality, typically presented in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy of the Old Testament focusses on the *Shekinah*, dwelling of the Lord with the people, making the events of their long journey from Egypt to Palestine a manifestation of Yahweh's glory to the world. Hence in that history nothing is trivial, but the expression of the Lord's great deeds to be gratefully cherished and to be handed down from generation to generation. East Syrian church translated this idea of the Lord's presence into a vivid awareness of the dwelling of Christ the Risen Lord and of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Eucharistic sacrifice, the sacraments, the different feasts of the year and the divine office were experienced as the celebration of that divine presence transforming the life of the Christian.

Hindu spirituality also has its focus in realizing the Atman, as the authentic Self of all, the One without a second. Our life task is to see the Atman in all things and all things in the Atman. The material world is not something to be shunned or denied but to be transformed into an expression and epiphany of the Atman through *tapas* and *dhyana*, austerities and contemplation.

A Historico - Ecclesiological Development of the Chaldean Church

1. Name - Chaldean Church

Chaldean Church is that church which had its head quarters in Seleucia-Ctesiphon on the either side of the river Tigris. Later the head quarters was transferred to Bagdad and to several other places. Today there are Catholics and Non-Catholics (Nestorians) in this Church. The Catholics are known as Chaldeans, while the non-Catholics are only very rarely known after this name.¹

This Church was and is known by several names: (1) *East Syrian Church*, because of the language, East Syriac, which they use in their liturgy. (2) *Nestorian Church*, because they accepted Nestorius as the Doctor of the Church. It was the Monophysites who called the Chaldeans, Nestorians and in the beginning the latter opposed it with all vehemence. (3) *Persian Church* because it was the chief Christian Church, in the Arsacid - Sassanid Persian Empire. In the strict sense, the term was applied to the Church of Fars (Persia proper). Later Fars came under the Chaldean Church whose centre was Seleucia-Ctesiphon. (4) *Babylonian Church* because it was in the old Babylonian Empire. (5) *Diphysite Church in Persia* because it upheld the diphysite (double Qnome) Christology. (6) *The Church of the East* is a name most dear to the members of the Chaldean Church. (7) *The Catholic Apostolic Orthodox Church* was also a name used by the members of this church. (8) *The Assyrian Church* is the name given to the Chaldean Church by the Anglican Missionaries who came into contact with them. The missionaries wanted to avoid the pejorative meaning in the

1. P. J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Alleppey, 1976, p. 16-17.

expression "Nestorian Church". It was the church in the ancient Assyrian Empire.²

2. Locality and Rulers

The Persian Empire, where the Chaldean Church had its growth and development, comprised the modern Iran, Iraq and parts of Syria and Turkey. At the time when Christianity entered Persia, it was ruled by the Arsacid Kings (240 B.C - 226 A.D.). From 227 to 628 the Persian rulers were the Sassanid Emperors, among whom the most important emperors were Shapur I (241-272), Shapur II (309 - 379), Cosroes I (531 - 579), and Cosroes II (590 - 628).³

There were also two small principalities in the Eastern Frontier. They were the Osroene, with Ulla (Urhah or Edessa) as its capital,⁴ and Adiabene with Eber as its capital.⁵ In course of time these two became part of Persian and Roman Empires.

With the Arab conquest after 630 Persia became part of the new Muslim Kingdom. Their rule in this region remained for centuries. Later it came under the Turks and the Moguls who became Muslims.

3. People

The people in Osroene and Adiabene were of Semitic origin having Aramaic (Syriac) as their mother tongue. They were not highly influenced by the Roman or Greek culture.⁶ In the Euphrates-Tigris valley in the Persian Empire also there were a lot of semitic people. During the Parthian reign there

2. A. S. Atiya, *History of Eastern Christianity*, London, 1967, p. 239. note, 1.

3. Cf. F. Miller, *The Roman Empire and Its Neighbours*, London, 1967, p. 268.

4. J. B. Segal, *Edessa, the Blessed City*, Oxford, 1970, p. 1-3.

5. Cf. J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*. III. From Shapur I to Shapur II, Leiden, 1968, p. 354.

6. Cf. F. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

was a revival of and return to Orientalism. These people were under the influence of a mixed culture. In the cities adjacent to the Greco-Persian border, there was always a policy of giving and taking. In the cities through which the trade routes passed, there was a diversity of cultures. In the cities founded by the Greeks such as Susa there was the predominance of Greek culture; cities like Seleucia were highly under the influence of Hellenism; in the parthian cities like Ctesiphon, the Parthian culture was prevalent.

In Mesopotamia there were many Jewish centres. They were either merchants or permanent settlers. In all the important centres they had the upper hand in trade. Thus there were groups of Jews in Charax, Sparinu, Duro-Europos, Nicephorium, Carrhae, Edessa, Gundashpur, Guzaca, Hircania, Adiabene. Nisibis and Amid.⁷ In Nisibis there was the Jewish Academy and the Jews in Seleucia and other places were under the influence of the Pharisaic Judaism in Palestine.

4. Origin of Christianity in Persia

Christianity was brought to Persia by the Jewish converts through the medium of Aramaic.⁸ It was spread first among the Jews and then other semitic people. There are different opinions regarding the origin of Christianity in Persia:

1) The Magi who came from the East to adore the infant Jesus was from Persia. When they went back, this Aramaic speaking Magi sowed the seed of the salvific message for the first time in the Persian Soil.⁹

2) The second theory is based on the Abgar legend. King Abgar Ukkama of Oshroene (4 B.C. - 50 A.D.), invited Jesus to come to Edessa to cure him of his sickness. Christ promised that he would send one of his disciples and accordingly Mar

7. Cf. J. B. Segal. *op. cit.*, p. 41

8. T. Puthiakunnel, "Jewish Colonies of India paved way for St Thomas" in *OCA* 156 (1970), p. 187-191; P. J. Podipara, *Thomas Christians and their Syriac Treasures*, Alleppey 1979, p. 26ff.

9. A. S. Atiya *op. cit.*, p. 242-243.

Adai, one of the seventy disciples was sent to Edessa and thus he brought Christianity there among the Persians.¹⁰

(3) The Apocryphal "Acts of Thomas" speaks of the missionary activity of Thomas in Parthia.

(4) Among the Jews who listened to St Peter on Pentecost, there were Jews from Parthia, Media Elam and Mesopotamia (Acts 2:9). Those Jews who became Christians on that day brought the Christian message to Persia.

5) St Thomas preached in some of the regions of the Persian Empire. The first ecclesiastical writer who connects St Thomas with Parthia is Origen, and Eusebius reproduces it in his Church History.¹¹ St Thomas put his disciple (one among the seventy) Adai to Edessa and Arbela.¹² Adai sent Mari to Seleucia and it was known as the "Throne of Mari". Another disciple of Adai, Ahai, preached in "Persia, Assyria, Armenia, Media, the regions around Babylon".¹³ Fars claimed always that it received the Gospel from St Thomas.

6) There was continuous contacts between Jews in Palestine and the Jews in Mesopotamia. Commercial and religious contacts continued between these two groups and it accelerated the growth of Christianity in Persia. In the beginning, Christianity took roots among those Jews who were not under the very strong influence of Rabbinic Judaism (Tannaim) and other Semitic population. Thus during the Arsacid reign, Christianity was chiefly spread in Oshroene Adiabene and the Euphrates - Tigris valley. There were more than 20 bishoprics in Persia before 227,

10. J. B. Segal, *op. cit.*, p. 62 ff.

11. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 1:1; cf. T. Scermann, *Propheten und Apostellegenden...*, in *TL* 31, Leipzig, 1907, p. 272-276.

12. J. B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, Paris, 1902, p. 564-567.

13. Cf. J. B. Tixeront, *Les Origines de l'Eglise d'Edesse et la légende d'Ibgar*, Paris, 1888, p. 69ff; J. Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse sous le Sassanide* Paris 1904, p. 17, note 2.

but none in Nisibis and Seleucia.¹⁴ Later, however, there the Jewish centres became the ecclesiastical centres of the Chaldean Church - Nisibis, the intellectual centre, and Seleucia, the administrative centre.¹⁵

5. Growth of Christianity under the Sassanid Emperors (227 - 628)

Christianity grew in Persia during the Sassanid rule. Several factors contributed to it. Several groups of Jews and non-Jews became Christians.

1) First of all, the missionary activity of the early converted semitic Christians helped the growth of Christianity in Persia.

2) Secondly, the "imported" Christians from the Byzantine Empire by the deportation policy of the Persian Emperors. Shapur I (241 - 272) and Shapur II (309 - 379) deported several groups of Christians from Asia Minor and Armenia and settled them in the Western Satrapies and Khusistan. These Christians were assimilated into the Semitic - Aramaic Christians in Persia and did not exert a radical Greek influence there.¹⁶ Between 531 and 620 Chosroes I and II deported large numbers of Christians mostly Chalcedonians and Monophysites from the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁷ These deported

14. Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos*. 7: PL II, 649 ff; J. Labourt, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Cf. E. Tisserant, *L'Eglise nestorienne*, in "Recueil Cardinal Eugène Tisserant - ab oriente et occidente", tom. I, Louvain, 1956, p. 145-146. A. Mingana (ed.) *Sources syriaques*, t. I, Mossoul, 1907, p. 30/tr. p. 106.

15. J. Neusner, *op. cit.* p. 356-358; IDEM, *ibid.* I. *The Parthian Period*, London, 1969, p. 189.

16. J. Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism: Christian Jewish Argument in the 4th century*, London, 1971, p. 2; J. M. Fiey, *L'Elam, la première des Métropoles Ecclesiastiques syriennes Orientales*, in "Melto" 1969, p. 221-267.

17. R. Browning, *Justinian and Theodora*, London, 1971, p. 172; J. B. Bury, *History of the later Roman Empire from the death of Theodosius I to the death of Justinian*, vol. 2, New York, 1958, p. 92-100; L. Duchesne, *L'Eglise au VIe siècle*. Paris, 1925, p. 320.

Christians augmented the number of the Christians in Persia and made a lasting influence there because of their doctrinal differences. The original Aramaic Christianity was not able to assimilate all the new elements.

(3) The third reason for the numerical augmentation of Christianity in Persia was the influx of the persecuted "heretics" from the Byzantine Empire. Some of the Byzantine Emperors followed a policy of persecuting the non-Chalcedonians; but they allowed them to escape to the neighbouring Persia.¹⁸ It is incorrect, as some held, that the Chaldean Church was much isolated in the beginning. But the sources tell us that there was so much giving and taking in the border provinces of Byzantine and Persian Empires.¹⁹

In the sixth and seventh centuries there were various Christian communities having their own creeds in Persia. New communities brought with them new theological visions and the ancient Aramaic (Chaldean) Church gave expression to its faith differently. It resulted in groupisms and divisions among them.

The Sassanid Emperors especially Chosroes I and II persecuted the Chaldean Church. From 608-9 to 628 Chosroes II did not permit the Chaldeans to prosper under a common head, Catholicos Patriarch. He tolerated the Christians, Jacobites and the Chaldeans. He simply pretended to be friendly with them.

6. Persian Hierarchy

By the 4th century the Bishops of Seleucia became prominent and demanded a sort of supremacy over the other bishops in Persia. Papa bar Aggai (+ 341) reorganized the Persian Church and considered himself head of the Persians; it was op-

18. A. Vocebus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, I, (CSCO 184), Louvain, 1958, p. 145.

19. A. Vocebus. *ibid.* p. 189.

posed by the bishops of Fars and elsewhere.²⁰ Papa was deposed, but he came to power with the help of the "Western Fathers", namely the Patriarch of Antioch and bishop of Edessa. In a synod in 410 under Isaac, in Seleucia, the Persian bishops accepted the leadership of the Seleucian bishops and in 424 under Dadisho in Markabta the Persian Church was declared autocephalous.

The Persian bishops were consecrated by the Antiochian Patriarchs. Later because of hostilities between Persian and Byzantine Empires, it was dangerous to look to Antioch always for consecration. Hence the Western Fathers allowed the Seleucians to consecrate the bishops in Persia itself. They produce two letters of the Western Fathers, permitting them to do so.²¹ They decided in their synod that no appeal against their Patriarch should be made to the Western Fathers.

Some consider it the beginning of the schism of the Chaldeans: but others consider it the expression of their desire for freedom. The Chaldeans have great respect for the letters of the Western Fathers²² and in those days they did not consider that they were not part of the Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ and that they were a separated community.

From that time onwards, the Chaldean Church was organizing itself. After that event and especially after the council of Ephesus the Chaldean Church began to develop ecclesiologically and theologically in its own way.

7. Persecutions

When Emperor Constantine allowed freedom of worship to the Christians, Christianity was seen by the Persian Kings as the religion of the enemies. The situation became worse

20. A. Mingana, *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, Manchester 1926, p. 33; P. J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy*, p. 19; *Thomas Christians* p. 37. F. Dvornick, *National Churches and the Church Universal*, Westminster, 1944, p. 8-9.

21. J. S. Assemani, *De Catholicis seu Patriarchis Chaldeorum et Nestorianorum Commentarium*. Rome, 1775, p. xiff.

22. E. Tisserant, *art. cit.* p. 149.

when Constantine wrote to Shapur II asking him to protect the Christians. It was looked down upon with great suspicion by the King of kings.²³ Even though Nestorianism was a heresy in the Roman Empire, some of the Byzantine Emperors came forward as the protectors of the Nestorians in Persia. This aggravated the situation. Shapur started a persecution for 40 years.²⁴

Whenever the Persian Emperors attacked the Byzantine Empire, they considered that they were attacking a Christian Empire. During the war there were Christian priests carrying portable churches on the Byzantine side. Shapur also was surrounded by the Magi.²⁵ Failure of Persians in war meant over-taxation for the Christians. During the sixth and the seventh centuries, concession from Mazdeism was a crime deserving capital punishment. Chosroes II was a cruel tyrant. From 608-9 till 628 he was oppressing the Chaldeans.²⁶ As a result of the hostility a lot of Christians, including Patriarchs, Bishops, and priests, were massacred in Persia.

8. School of Nisibis

The intellectual centre of the Chaldean Church was the School of Nisibis. In Nisibis, as in Edessa, the school continued the traditions of St. Ephrem. From the time of Ibas of Edessa (435-457), the school followed Theodore of Mopsuestia in theology and exegesis. He was their "Theologian", "the Interpreter", "the Pillar of Orthodoxy", and "the Teacher of teachers".²⁷ Narsai, the first chief teacher of Nisibis, opposed vehemently the Alexandrian theological tradition. Patriarchs Mar Aba I,

23. K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, vol. I, New York, 1970, p. 105, 225; J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, IV, The Age of Shapur II, Leiden, 1969, p. 2.

24. W. A. Wigram, *Assyrians and their Neighbours*, London, 1929, p. 50.

25. J. Neusner, *ibid.* p. 22.

26. *Chronicon Anonymum*, (CSCO I), Louvain 1903, p. 19.

27. F. Martin (ed.), *Homilie de Narsai sur les trois docteurs nestoriens*, in *J4*, IX, 14 (1899), Paris, p. 475.

Ishoiahb I, Gregory I and several others stood for Theodorian orthodoxy. They decided in their synods that Theodore alone should be followed in theology and exegesis. They condemned, in fact, all those who spoke or wrote against the Interpreter. Their bishops were formed in Theodorianism and they were committed to that cause.

Between 523 and 533 Mar Aba made a pilgrimage in the Roman Empire and when he returned, he brought with him the books of Nestorius and the Anaphoras known after Theodore and Nestorius. He gave the lead to translate these materials into Syriac. Thus in the 6th century at the time of Mar Aba, Nestorius appeared for the first time in the Chaldean Church of Persia.²⁸

In 562/3 there was an ecumenical discussion in Constantinople. It was Justinian the Emperor, who sent the invitations to the different Christian communities. Abraham of Beth Rabban, the then head of the School of Nisibis, was invited. Justinian convoked it in 562/3 after the synod in 553 (II Council of Constantinople) in which the Person and writings of Theodore were condemned. The discussions were more politically motivated than theological. Hence the discussion did not have any fruit. On the contrary, it produced adverse effects. The Chaldeans from now onwards began to use the names of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius in the Dyptics and a fuller commitment to Theodorianism emerged. What was considered as heresy by Justinian was repudiated and rejected by the Chaldeans. What they did in 553 was considered heresy by the Chaldeans. The School gave the lead and the Church followed it.

9. Nestorianism of the Chaldean Church

In the third Ecumenical council in 431, Nestorianism was declared heresy; Nestorius was excommunicated and exiled. From 431 till 553, it was the period of the fall of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Diodore of Tarsus. In a synod of Constantinople in 499 Diodore was declared guilty. Emperor Justinian and the

28. J. Labourt. *op. cit.* p. 166.

Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 pronounced verdicts against Theodore and his writings.

The Chaldean Church, however, was from the beginning for Theodorian theology and tradition. Theologians like Ibas, Maana, Qumi, Probos, Narsai, Bar Sauma, Mar Aba, and Mar Abraham de Beth-Rabban were totally dedicated for the spread of Theodorian orthodoxy. It was Mar Babai Rabba (+628) who fixed their Christology as it is today.

Babai wrote a book called "the Book of Union" about the Incarnation of the Word; and it is in this book that we find his Christology. Babai's Christology is as follows: Jesus Christ is the Head of our life, our Hope and our God. Jesus Christ is our God. He is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is eternal God; so He knows everything. He is our God and we are His servants. We must adore Him with the whole creation. He is the cause of our salvation and our eternal life. He is the basic principle of our life, our God and our Teacher. He is our wisdom, our power and our consolation. He is the Head of the Church.²⁹

God is the beginning of our salvation. The second person of the Trinity, God the Word, having the *parsopa* of Filiation, received our humanity to His *parsopa* and gave His *parsopa* to the man taken from us. Thus in the very moment of the conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the *parsopa* of the Word became the *parsopa* of the humanity. He has a perfect human nature and a perfect divine nature. But the *parsopa* of Filiation is only one. Thus Jesus of Nazareth is at the same time God and man. The Only Begotten of God through incarnation became the first-born of Mary.

Babai explains it also in technical languages for the Christians in Persia: Jesus Christ has two *kyane*, i. e., natures in its abstract form. It means that in Him there is humanity and divinity. In order that the two *kyane* may be actualized, there are two *q'ome*. *Qnoma*, therefore, is the actualization or concretization of the *kyana*-which is abstract. *Kyana* as such does

29. Babai, *Liber de Unione*. (ed.), A. Vasehalde (CSCO 79/tr. 30). Louvain, 1915, p. 2: 6, 27, 39, 139, 160, 245, 28.

not exist. It exists as *Qnoma*. To say that there are two *qnome* in Jesus Christ is equivalent to saying He is God and man in reality or actuality, or there is duality in Him actualised or realized. One may ask, is it not then enough to speak of two *qnome* alone without mentioning the two *kyane*? The answer is this: The concept of *kyana* was current among them and it was used in theological discussions even before the Christological controversies. Babai was committed to the two *qnome* system and it is not, in fact, his invention. He was making use of the already available ways of thinking among them and was giving a further justification. In reality, it is enough to say two *Qnoma*. Even by saying two *kyane*, he meant two natures (the abstract humanity and divinity), and by two *qnome*, he meant the actualization of the two natures (man and God).

Parsopa can be translated as "personality" or "person". In Jesus Christ, there is only one *parsopa* of filiation. It means that that which is the property of the Word of God, namely filiation, is the *parsopa* of the Word. And the Son of man received this *parsopa* of filiation as his own *parsopa*. Christ is one in His divine *parsopa*. In his origin Christ is indivisible and unique. But there is duality in Him. Babai calls Him God and man.

Word of God out on (*U'besa*) the man. It is a conjunction (*synaphia*). It is an indwelling. This union does not result in any kind of mixture of the divinity and humanity, man and God: both are most intimately, and inseparably united, but never mixed at any moment. The union takes only at the level of *parsopa*. The union is effected in the *parsopa* of the Word, so much so that the two natures remain separately. There is no fusion of two natures into one; two realities remain distinct, but not distant, in Him. So there is no union of *kyane* and no union of *qnome*. There is union only in the *parsopa*, which is proper to the Word and is ontological. Without change, without mixing, without separation, the two realities are in Jesus Christ.

All the attributes are ultimately to the one *parsopa*. If we say Son it is the one *parsopa*. If we say man it is He, the same *parsopa*. If we say Only-Begotten or Firstborn, the Lord of Glory,

the Son of David, the Son of the Almighty, it is the same *parsopa*.³⁰ This is in substance the Christology of Babai and it is, indeed, the Christology of the Chaldean Church.

It is clear that the Nestorian heresy is not seen in Babai, nor in the Chaldean Church, although he is known as the Nestorian theologian, and his Church, the Nestorian Church. The Nestorian heresy—that there are two persons in Jesus Christ; the blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother only of the man Jesus; there is only a moral union between the two persons in Jesus Christ; the blessed Virgin Mary cannot be called Mother of God (*theotokos*)—is never seen in Babai and in his Church. Modern scholarship shows that Nestorius himself was not a Nestorian heretic. It would be unreal to stamp the Chaldean Church, Nestorian. There are beautiful hymns in their Divine Office, praising the blessed Virgin Mary.³¹ Their divine office is abundant with expressions such as “the Mother of our Lord”, “Mary who brought forth Emmanuel, the Son of God”, “the Mother of the Saviour”, “the Mother of Christ our God”, etc.³²

The Chaldeans feared that the expression “Mother of God” (*theotokos* - *emneh d'alaha*) may refer to the Trinity. So they preferred the expression “Mother of God the Word”. They never deny the divine maternity of the blessed Virgin Mary. She is for them truly the Mother of God. It meant not that the divinity was taken from her, but the one who was born of her is truly God and man. This they believed and still do hold firmly. She is not only mother of God, but also mother of Jesus the man.³³

From this it must be inferred that the Chaldeans did not accept the Nestorian heresy which was rejected by the Catholic Church.

30. Cf. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great* (551-628), A Historico-Doctrinal Study, Rome, 1978 (Doctoral dissertation in Augustinianum).

31. P. J. Podipara, *Mariology of the Church of the East*, Rome, 1980.

32. Cf. X. Koodapuzha, *The Schism and Nestorian Heresy*, Rome, 1964, (Doctoral dissertation, Propaganda College), p. 45-52.

33. Cf. *Ibid.* p. 52-56.

10. Persian Synods

The synodal history of the Chaldean Church begins with the synod of Seleucia in 410 under Mar Isaac of Seleucia and Mar Marutha of Maipharkatt. It was in that synod that the Chaldeans accepted the creed and the decrees of the Council of Nicaea in 325.³⁴ During the subsequent centuries there were several synods among them, but none of them deviated from the Creed of Nicaea. If we analyse the subsequent synods we will be astounded to find that, although they did not formally accept the Council of Chalcedon in 451, they were basically Chalcedonians.³⁵ The following are their chief synods after 410: in 486 under Mar Accacius, in 544 under Mar Aba, in 554 under Mar Joseph, in 576 under Mar Ezekiel, in 585 under Mar Ishoiahb, in 596 under Mar Sabasisho, in 605 under Mar Gregory I, in 615 when there was no Patriarch.³⁶

11. Arab Invasions

The Arab invasion from Arabia was a fatal blow not only to the Byzantine Empire, but also to the Persian Empire and the Christians in Persia. But during the subsequent centuries, in the Persian Church, one can note a very extraordinary growth. The principal trade routes passed through the Christian centres - Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Nisibis, Arbela, Merv, Samarqand - and it was through these paths that the Christian missionaries entered several regions in central Asia, China and Mangolia. When the Christian communities in the Arabian peninsula were destroyed by the Arabs by the 9th century, the Chaldean Church turned its attention Eastwards. By the 10-12 centuries they reached upto Semirychensk in Southern Siberia, and Shensi in central China.

The Chaldean Church reached the zenith of its expansion in the 11th century. Under the Patriarch there were twenty Metropolitan provinces and in each province several Bishops. The Metropolitan Sees were the following: Kashkar, Jundispur, Nisibis, Basra, Mossoul, Arbel, Kark, Holwan, Riwardashir,

34. J. B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 17-36.

35. Chediath, *op. cit.* p. 113-115.

36. J. B. Chabot, *op. cit.*; O. Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados*, Stuttgart-Wien, 1900.

Merv, Taurissium, Herat, Warda, Rai, Mukkar, India, Siaphur, Samargand, Damascus, and Jerusalem. According to J. S. Assemani, during the 13th century, atleast there were 25 Metropolitan sees, and in each province 8-10 bishops.³⁷

The Moguls, who devastated everything behind them in central and West Asia, made an end of the Chaldean Church there. Under the Moslems, the Church was persecuted. The Christians had to pay *Kharaj* and *Jizyah* (land and head taxes). Under Al-Mahdi (775-785) and Harun al-Rashid (785-809), al-Muthayyib (846-861), Christians including the Patriarchs were cruelly persecuted.³⁸ Some of the Chinese kings also followed a policy of persecuting the Christian religion.

12. Beginning of the End

Their downfall began with the Arab, Turkish and Mongol invasions : Arabs from the south, the Turks from central Asia, and Moguls from Mongolia. Between 760-762 Arabs made Bagdad their capital and the Seleucid Patriarch changed his residence to Bagdad. Covetous men had eyes on the Patriarchal throne and one of such was Timothy I (779-823). By the 12th century, there were periods when more than one person claimed to be the real Chaldean Patriarch. The Turkish leader, Timur between 1380 and 1387 destroyed the culture and everything of Khurasan, Balistan, Arsaljan, Alganistan, Fars, Qandishan, Bagdad and Punjab. The Christian communities in Tihana, Jundishpur, Salaha, Kayka, Bagdad, Mossoul, Arbel, Nisibis, Gades, Tibris, and Margā who disappeared from history for ever. Because of these attacks the Chaldean Church had terrible, irreparable loss.³⁹

13. From the sixteenth century onwards

During the 16th century a group of the Chaldeans began to have contacts with the Bishop of Rome. Thus in 1552 John Sulaqa was elected Catholicos and was sent to Rome. He had an opponent, Simcon bar Mama, who received the Patriarchal throne through hereditary succession. Bishop of Rome acknowledged Sulaqa as the Patriarch of the Chaldeans. This relation with Rome continued till Simon XIII (1662-1700). Sulaqa was succeeded by Abdisho (+1567), Ahethallā (+1579), and Mar Denha (+1600). Later this

37. *BO* III, 2,630ff.

38. *Ibid.* p. 269.

39. *Ibid.* p. 271ff.

line of Patriarchs lost the contact with Rome and thus originated today's Nestorian Church. Meanwhile, the opposite group established relations with Rome and we have today the Catholic Chaldeans from this line.

14. Ecclesiological developments – a Schism?

The Chaldean Church had its apostolicity from St Thomas the Apostle, Mar Adai, Mar Agai and Mar Mari. As we notice in the extant records, this apostolic succession was not handed over by the imposition of hands to posterity. The first bishops of Edessa and Seleucia were consecrated by the bishops of Antioch or Jerusalem. Thus we see Palut of Edessa being ordained by Serapion of Antioch, Abrosis, the successor of Vari in Seleucia by the bishop of Jerusalem. Mar Abraham and Mar Jacob the successors of Abrosius, also did the same thing.⁴⁰ The successor of Jacob, Mar Ahadabui went to Antioch together with his friend Qamisho. They were suspected and Qamisho was killed on the way, while Ahadabui escaped to Jerusalem and was ordained Catholicos there. It was during his period that the "letters from the Western Fathers" appeared.⁴¹ According to these letters, the Seleucian bishops were not necessitated to go to Antioch or Jerusalem for episcopal ordination and ratification. It is enough that the Persian bishops elect them and ordain them. This act of autonomy was motivated by the political problems between Byzantium and Persia and can in no way be considered as an act of schism.

Before the fifth century, the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was known as "the Great Metropolitan". In 424 he received the title "Catholicos" and later "Catholicos Patriarch". It was Mar Aba who used thus for the first time.⁴²

Until the Council of Ephesus (431) almost all the Churches in the Roman Empire remained in mutual communion. Even though the Persian Church did not have very closer relations

40. Bar Haebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, T. III, col. 19 – 22.

41. *Ibid.* 23-26; *BO* III, 1. p. 51ff.

42. J. B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 318.

with the Churches in the Roman Empire owing to political reasons, they also considered themselves the true Church of Christ and was so regarded by other Churches. The aftermaths of the Councils of Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), and Constantinople II (553) divided the Churches in the Roman Empire. Emperors and political theologians presented new formulations and definitions before the people. It was a period of great doctrinal confusion in Byzantium. And political hostilities continued between Byzantium and Persia. In the Byzantine Empire, the Persian Church began to be known as Nestorian. This appellation was the "contribution" of the Monophysites. It is true that the Persians were Theodorian in their theology and thought and they respected Nestorius, but they did not deviate from their original stand.

15. Ecclesiological particularities

The Chaldeans were very highly influenced by the ascetically oriented factions of the palestinian Christianity and monastic movements played an important role in the growth and development of that Church. It produced a type of Christianity, different from that of Rome, or Byzantium or elsewhere.

One can say that there was a kind of isolation for the Persians. Political hostility between Persia and Byzantium was the only factor for this isolation. Otherwise there was much in common between Palestinian Christianity and Mesopotamian Christianity in the beginning.

After 431 their theological growth was in isolation. They took their stand from Theodore and based on what they developed as their way of thinking and theologizing. And here also one cannot speak of a radical and total isolation and alienation.

The Chaldean Church was highly missionary oriented. The persecutions and tortures they suffered for the Gospel reveal the reality. If one remembers their tribulations and hardships, martyrs and confessors under Shapur, Chosroes, Arabs, Moguls, Timur and the Turks, he will realize the profound spiritual vitality and evangelical dynamism of this ancient Church which existed in the Persian Empire outside the Roman influence.

16. Communication and Communion

It is very clear that the Chaldean Church did not have direct and unbroken relation with the Church of Rome. All the same they were quite aware of the eminence of the Roman Church and they did accept its position.⁴³ In the so called Nicaeno-Arabic canons there are clear references to the pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome,⁴⁴ and it is interesting to note that the Persians in general were not against the Primacy of the Roman bishop. Babai the Great in his "Book of Union" speaks of blessed Leo who reigns in the Throne of St Peter.⁴⁵ The same teaching is seen in Ishoiahb III, Timothy I, Metropolitan Elias, Bannattius Abdiso of Soba and Armenia and others.⁴⁶

During the middle ages Rabban Ara (+1247), Bar Sauma Magurita (+1287), Jabalaha III (+1304), John Sulaqa (+1552), Mar Elias (+1580) etc., visited the Roman Church and proclaimed its preeminence.⁴⁷

When there were hostilities between the Byzantines and the Romans, it was not possible to have frequent communications. But when opportunities were present, the Chaldeans tried to establish communion. Communion need not necessarily imply communications. They considered that they are the Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ in the East.

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43. Cf. X. Koodapuzha, *The Schism and Heresy*, p. 65ff.

44. Canon. 2, 8, 37, 44, 70, 71; X. Koodapuzha, *ibid*; H. S. Scott, (ed.), *The Eastern Churches and Papacy*, London, 1928, p. 386.

45. Babai, *op. cit.* p. 76.

46. Cf. Codex Vat. Syr. 43 fol. 101; X. Koodapuzha, *ibid*. p. 67ff.

47. *Ibid.* p. 78-83.

Authority and Its Exercise – Biblical v. Western and Oriental Perspectives

There is going to be no end of discussion on authority in the Church because it has become so crucial to the understanding of the Church and of freedom within it as well as to the growth of unity among the Churches. But the discussions will not bear lasting fruit unless a radical change takes place in its exercise and in its varied other expressions. It was interesting to read in an article on 'Authority in the Church today' published in a recent issue of one of our periodicals: 'We encounter today two opposite attitudes towards Church authority, both widespread among Christians. Many welcome it as a source of security in the Church, frequently stressed in former times: We have the truth, enjoy safe guidance, are protected against aberrations.... On the other side, authority is strongly suspected and resented as it seems to conflict with the deepest aspirations of contemporary man... so that "the demand is increasingly made that men should exercise fully their own judgement and responsible freedom in their actions"'. As if the two attitudes were equally commendable! But if men 'should exercise fully their own judgement and responsible freedom', is the former cosy attitude correct? Cannot that feeling of 'security' be an illusion? From the part of the Church authority, will not the fostering of such an attitude amount to spoon-feeding and blind-folding the people? From the part of the latter, will it not be a clear shirking of their Christian responsibility, which will eventually lead to abuse of authority? How true ring the words of Yves Congar: "The Church is wholly responsible for the idea that her hierarchical ministers have of the nature of their authority and for the way in which they exercise it. If they are treated as potentates, they will become potentates. If they are deferred to with servility, it will be too easy for them to let

their lives be ruined by the spirit of domination which is very tenacious of life in the heathen that still survives in each one of us.”²

1. Jesus' teaching

Jesus wanted his Church to be a brotherhood. So he told his disciples, “You are all brothers”³, and warned them: “You must not be called ‘Teacher’”, for you have only one Teacher.... You must not call anyone on earth ‘Father’ for you have only one Father and he is in Heaven. Nor must you call anyone ‘Leader’”, for your one ‘Leader’ is the Messiah”⁴. Some of the best biblical scholars have observed that this passage contains private teaching addressed to the inner circle of the disciples and not to the whole community, because the relationship of that circle to Jesus was such that they could not be greeted as though they were occupying a place which was Christ’s prerogative⁵. But from Jesus’ explicit teaching on authority in the Church, it would seem that this warning holds good also in the whole community of the Church even after his death.

A word about the corporate aspect of the Church may seem commonplace. But no correct perspective of authority in the Church can be had outside the community of the Church. Jesus has said: “Where two or three meet in my name I shall be there with them”⁶. Now two or three are as small a number as can be had in a community. In Lk 10:10-15, we see Jesus pronouncing judgement against whole towns, which implies that he is looking for corporate rather than individual response to the Gospel. Fraternal correction has, if need be, to be ultimately submitted to the decision of the (local) Church (and not to the arbitrary decision of the office-bearers)⁷. Whether the statement in Mt is authentic or not, it reflects the order followed in the

2. Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, Chapman, London, 1964 p. 105.

3. Mt 23:8

4. ib. 23:8-10

5. cf. *Matthew*, ed. by W. E. Albright and C. S. Mann Doubleday, 1973, p. 279.

6. Mt 18:20

7. cf. Mt 18:17

early Church. Then the community of disciples is given the power of binding and loosing⁸, the same power of binding and loosing given to Peter⁹: "I solemnly tell you that whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven". (Misunderstanding of this passage must have caused a lot of abuse of authority in the Church. It is the Church on earth that is carrying out heaven's decisions, communicated by the Spirit and not heaven that ratifies the Church's decisions.)¹⁰

Jesus' teaching on authority in the Church is exceptionally clear. We shall choose two sets of parallel passages from the Synoptics and a parable in action from John for consideration. Of the first set of parallels, viz., Mt 18: 1-5; Mk 9: 33-37; Lk 9:46-49, Mt seems to be the original and more natural. In all the three Jesus was answering a dispute among his disciples as to who was the greatest among them in the kingdom of heaven, i. e., the Church¹¹. In the Matthean tradition Jesus promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter. After predicting his death and resurrection he was already on his way to Jerusalem. This was a natural setting for the above question which so intimately concerned the messianic community after his death. Jesus calling a little child and setting him in front of them, said: "I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me."¹² Both ideas of becoming like a child and welcoming one are in all the three parallels,

8. ib. 18:18

9. cf. ib. 16:19

10. cf. Albright and Mann, op. cit., p. 197. It cannot but be so. God has given his Spirit to the Church which is the Spirit's creation. But he is not, and cannot be, identified with the Church. He is free and works where and when he wills. He is in no way bound by the Church, but the Church is ever bound to be attentive to his voice and conformable to his inspiration.

11. cf. ib. c-cv.

12. 18:2-5. cf. J. L. McKenzie in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Chapman, London, 1968, 43:125

though in the Marcan and Lukan versions the point lies not in the *child's* attitude, but in the attitude of others towards him, the connection being that one achieves greatness in the Church by doing service to people as insignificant as little children. Mt alone seems to have caught the mind of Jesus. Becoming like a child is not only a condition for admission into the Church but an essential requisite for her offices. Ancient law did not consider child a person in the full sense. He was under the authority of his parents and was counted among their chattels. He could not act independently or assert himself. So what Jesus wants from the bearers of authority in his kingdom is to be wittingly what a child is unwittingly.

Let us take the second set of parallel passages in the Synoptics, viz. Mk 10:42-45, Mt 20:25-28 and Lk 22:25-27. Here the context is the same in Mk and Mt - the disciples being indignant at seeing James and John either directly or indirectly asking for the two most important positions in the kingdom. In Lk the occasion is a dispute among the disciples as to who is the greatest among them. Jesus' words in Mk and Mt are almost identical. Lk seems to have adapted the words to the occasion of the Last Supper and hints at Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet. Jesus called them to him and said: "You know that among the pagans the rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you, no. Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."¹³ What was true of the child in the ancient world was much more true of a slave who was legally considered no person at all, who could have no personal end to achieve. Jesus contrasts the position of the secular ruler with that of the ecclesial office-bearer. The former is characterized by self-assertion and self-aggrandizement, imposing his will upon others, the latter by self-denial and self-abasement, enduring the imposition of the will of others. Then Jesus proposes his own example of being the servant of all even to the point of making the supreme sacrifice of his life. His life is reduced to the level of a means

13. Mt 20:25-28. cf. o. c., 43:140

(ransom) by which salvation is achieved for others. This is not merely a piece of advice, but a command: "This *must not* happen with you, no."

The power of the keys, that of binding and loosing, and that of feeding the sheep are all to be interpreted in this light and exercised accordingly. Such power, if severed from the community of the Church, loses all its meaning. It is a power *within* (serving), and not (lording it) *over* the Church, a power (if we may say so) of *service*, and not of *domination*.

Is not something more implied in the words of Jesus? If he wants the bearers of authority in his Church to be like a *child* or a *slave*, with whom does decision rest? We are always told that authority in the Church is 'not delegated by the community of believers but coming from God'. Agreed. But it is no answer, it is no explanation of Jesus' use of the words: 'child' and 'slave'. What we can say is this: that is how it comes from God. At the least, Jesus' words imply an essential relation to the community, of all decisions taken in and for the Church. Hence the need, and not merely option, of dialogue and discussion and consultation with the community.

Corresponding to the institution of the Eucharist, there is in John the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus. Both take place during the Last Supper. "And as they were eating, he took bread.....¹⁴ "And during supper..... Jesus rose...".¹⁵ At the end of both there is the Lord's commission: "Do this in commemoration of me".¹⁶ "You also should do as I have done to you."¹⁷

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, and laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, which he wiped with a

14. Mk 14:22

15. Jn 13:2-4

16. Lk 22:19

17. Jn 13:15. cf. Y. Congar, o. c.

towel. When this ceremony was over he put on his garments and resumed his place, and said to them: "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me teacher and Lord and you are right, for so am I. If I then, your Lord and your teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done to you."¹⁸ The words of Jesus, as given by John here, are so reminiscent of those given by Luke, in answer to the question, during the same supper, as to who should be reckoned as the greatest. The passage needn't any further explanation.

Thus this teaching of Jesus is clearly attested by all the four evangelists. Nor can we doubt about its source as it goes so much against the grain and Jesus had to remind his disciples of it so often and so strongly.

A word about the Indian religious tradition will not be out of place here. Hinduism does not recognise any human authority, except that of the *guru*. Though it upholds the authority of the *Vedas*, it does not have a corpus of definitive doctrines and there are Hindu schools of thought ranging from theism to atheism. But the *guru* is acceptable to them all. The general presupposition is that the *guru* has been liberated from the trammels of this world and has had experience of God. There is a striking similarity in Jesus' teaching: He wants the pastors of his Church to be slaves for others' sake (or rather the other way, slaves for others' sake to be pastors) - to be intensely spiritual men, having experienced God in their fellow-men by their self-sacrificing love.

It follows that Christ's Church is not a pyramidal structure with the people forming the base and the different grades of authority built over it and tapering to an apex.¹⁹ It is not a vertical, but a horizontal community, a community of love, a real brotherhood.

2. Charismatic structure of the Church

Jesus' vivid description of his Church by the exquisite figure of "the vine and the branches" is even more picturesquely

18. Jn 13:3-5

19. cf. Mt 20:25-28

drawn out by Paul in his beautiful figure of "the body and its members", whose head is Jesus himself. It is further lit up by Paul with his doctrine of charisms. Some people conceive the Church as an edifice which once built, endures for ever or a machine which once set, goes on working or an institution which once started, establishes itself. But the Church is an organism which receives life from the Spirit of God. Authority is often conceived as something bestowed by Christ, or rather inherited from him, and handed down from generation to generation. In this conception Christ can be out of the picture altogether. This is a totally false idea. The pastors of the Church are only ministers of Christ who is with us always to the end of time²⁰, to whom "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given".²¹ There is a clear distinction between *potestas Christi* and *ministerium ecclesiae*, including *magisterium*.

Once the ministers begin acting on their own, the gospel directive "whoever listens to you listens to me"²² may not apply. So they have to be constantly on the alert whether what they preach are God's word and God's way of life and whether they are trying to be the 'least' among the brethren. It can never be taken for granted.

This is indeed difficult but nothing is difficult for God. The Spirit is ever present to the Church with his charisms in all their rich variety. One such is "the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of hands".²³ But it has to be stressed that there are other gifts of the same Spirit, not confined to the *ministerium* which is but one of the functions in the Church.²⁴ "Each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another... let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him and in which God has called him".²⁵ Paul gives lists of charisms to show their richness and variety: "... to some his gift was that they should be

20. cf. Mt 28:20

21. Mt. 28:18

22. Lk 10:16

23. 2 Tim 1:6

24. cf. 1 Cor 12:8

25. 1 Cor 7:7, 17

apostles, to some prophets, to some evangelists, to some pastors, and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ".²⁶

There is also a certain order or gradation in charisms: "God has appointed in the Church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles; then healers, helpers, leaders, speakers in various kinds of languages."²⁷ The spirit is completely free, "who apportions to each one individually as he wills".²⁸ Not every charism is given to any one or a few of the members. So the Apostle asks: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? do all work miracles? do all possess gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues?"²⁹ We are exhorted to guard against losing these charisms: "Do not quench the Spirit"³⁰, because "each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good".³¹ This can also be taken as a serious warning to the ministers of the Church as it can be done only at the risk of the whole Church. Paul exhorts each individual to "test everything; hold fast what is good".³² So discernment of the spirits is the responsibility of every christian and not necessarily of the office-bearers of the Church.

3. (a) Authority and freedom

Man has come of age. He values freedom so much that he would not barter it away for anything in the world. Without it man cannot lead an authentic life. The less he is free the more he will be alienated. Indian religious tradition has a clear intuition of this truth. According to it the ultimate goal of all human striving is *Mokṣa* - the *Parama Puruṣartha*. Freedom is not only the goal but the very foundation of every movement towards it; every man has his own way leading up to God.

Jesus said, "Truth will make you free"³³, and he is the Truth that frees and liberates. He is the life that gives freedom to the children of God, an unlimited freedom that is motivated

26. Eph 4: 11-13; cf. also Rom 12: 6-8; I Cor 12: 8-11.

27. I Cor 12: 28

28. I Cor 12: 11

29. I Cor 12: 29

30. I Thess 5: 19

31. I Cor 12: 7

32. I Thess 5: 21

33. Jn 8: 32

and constrained always and only by love. Not by selflove which is sin and slavery, but by *agape* which expands hearts and horizons, making men brothers of one another. This is the secret of freedom that is implied in Jesus' declaration that all commandments can be summed up and fulfilled in the double commandment of love of God and of one's neighbour; in his exempting the disciples from the law of fasting for no other reason than his being with them; in his action of breaking the rules of the Sabbath; and finally in his solemn declaration that "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath". Thus he freed man not only from sin but also from law. He indicted, in the strongest language, the scribes and pharisees for their legalism, for laying the burden of innumerable rules and regulations on others' heads.

St. Paul was the greatest spokesman and defender, in the Apostolic Church, of this freedom in Christ Jesus. He grasped, more than any other, the implications of the Gospel. "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery."³⁵ Christ freed us from the law that we might be really free, that is to say, in the language of today's philosophy, that we might be fully human, and lead a truly authentic life. As a staunch pharisee Paul was all respect for the Law: "the Law is holy, the commandment is holy and just and good."³⁶ But in the same letter to the Romans he calls it "the law of sin and death"³⁷. Bible scholars agree with Rudolf Bultmann when he says: "Paul does not criticise the law from the standpoint of its *content*, but with respect to its *significance* for man"³⁸. By the time of Paul the Law had assumed an absolute value. A Jew could keep the law and hold God indebted to him, or obey the law to the point of ignoring God. If such is the position the Law or any law comes to occupy in the life of man, then that is 'the law of sin and death'. Christ

34. Mk 2:27

35. Gal 5:1

36. Rom 7:12

37. ib. 8:2

38. quoted by W. J. Harrington in his article "Christian freedom" in *Doctrine and Life*, Sept. 1975, p. 629.

"has annulled in his flesh the law with its regulations and rules"³⁹ and not only the Law but every law except one, if it can at all be called a law. It is 'the law of the Spirit'⁴⁰ 'the law of faith'⁴¹, the law of love⁴². Hereafter nothing should be done or not done from any exterior compulsion or restraint. Man has not to obey any law or commandment. As Fr. Harrington says, "Obedience is man's response to God's offer of salvation - Faith is obedience"⁴³. Paul says, "I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion, but of your own free will"⁴⁴. What place then has law in our lives? It is a guide, a *paidagogos*⁴⁵. But it should not be identified with the will of God. That does not mean that one may ignore it altogether. One has the responsibility for making a critical judgement whether it is, for one, the will of God here and now.

There is, of course, a power for evil inherent in human freedom and so safeguards are required, but they should not be such as would stifle freedom. Nobody can be a saint against his will. Freedom is so essential to the Church that without it the Church would be as good as dead.

b) Authority and responsibility

Responsibility as the word itself suggests (*response-ability*) is that fine and delicate sense of one's being answerable to God for the totality of one's self, as God can call anyone in his totality to account. Secondly, one is answerable to one's fellow men and women in so far as one is accountable for the repercussions of one's actions and even of one's very presence on others. Only free persons can be responsible and all free persons must be. An irresponsible freedom will degenerate into licence which is sheer slavery.

Revelation and theology have opened up new horizons of responsibility. God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit has entered into constant communion with us and become the con-

39. Eph 2:15

41. ib. 3:27

43. *Doctrine and Life*, ib. p. 633

45. Gal 3:23-25

40. Rom 8:1

42. Gal 5:14;

44. Phm v. 14

scious centre of our lives. The charity of God urges us and we have to respond to His Word and to His love. Jesus first became our Brother and wants to meet us in his brothers: we are made into a brotherhood and should meet him in and through his brothers⁴⁶. So we have to be responsible to and for every one of them, even as members one to another of a body⁴⁷

Hence coresponsibility is the hall-mark of the Church. Cardinal Suenens says: "If we were to be asked what we consider to be that seed of life deriving from the Council (Vatican II) which is most fruitful in pastoral consequences, we would answer without any hesitation: it is the rediscovery of the people of God as a whole, as a single reality; and then by way of consequence, the coresponsibility thus implied for every member of the Church."⁴⁸ "The Holy Spirit", says the Council, "... 'allotting his charisms to everyone as he wills' (1 Cor 12:11)... makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church...".⁴⁹ All the charismatic wealth of the people of God have to be pressed into service, and all have to work, each according to his proper function and charism, in close solidarity for the accomplishment of the Church's mission. Individuals who shirk this responsibility and ministers who waive it aside sin against the Holy Spirit to the impoverishment of the Church.

4. Western and Oriental perspectives

Western and Oriental are used here in a broad sense. Western Church is Latin and all Churches other than Latin are Oriental.

(a) Western

Authority has been taking bizarre shapes in the Church down the centuries. The acts of the Church in *Acts* are always the acts of the whole Church. In early Christianity the Church

46. Mt 25:35-37

47. I Cor 12:27

48. *Coresponsibility in the Church*, Burns & Oates, London, 1968, p. 30

49. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 12

was the community of the faithful and the community that was the Church was of primary importance and could not be waived. Even Cyprian who was tenacious of episcopal authority says: "I have made it a rule, ever since the beginning of my episcopate to make no decision merely on the strength of my own opinion without consulting you (priests and deacons), without the approbation of the people."⁵⁰ In the early Church the local community chose their ministers. Soon pastors in the West became rulers, gradually drifting into the life-style of the Empire. That was the thin end of the wedge of separatist thinking of those in authority from those under them, which has not a little marred the unity, beauty and harmony of the Church. Now when one says 'the Church' we should be wary, and ask whether one actually means it. Most often what is meant would be "those in authority".

During the Middle Ages the Church in the West had come to be considered almost an anonymous entity, a juridical institution but with rights and privileges, and often a counterpart of the State. The pastoral ministry of the Church became a veritable 'government' with an elaborate 'law' and legal jargon, judiciary and executive so much so that in an emergency a 'canonist' had to be called in and his advice was followed. Here Roman legal genius had its free play. Power in the Church matched that of the State. Pope Gregory VII (1073-81) went so far as to say, of course, with good intentions that the Church (by "Church" here is meant for all practical purposes, the Pope) was 'mistress' not a 'servant'-a view which happened to be the direct opposite of the Gospel directive: 'to serve and not lord it over'.⁵¹ With that the servant of the servants of God, or rather both the servant and the servants had gone. The pope and the bishops became king and princes who appropriated all the functions in the Church as if to themselves and tried to control the whole lives of christians. But "the body is not to be identified with any one of its many parts.... God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose."⁵² Extreme centraliza-

50. quoted by Y. Congar, o. c. p. 43

51. *ib.* p. 105

52. 1 Cor 12:14, 18

tion, dating back from the Gregorian Reform, was resorted to by the papacy with the very good intention of extricating the Church from her subjection to secular powers and thus effecting the needful conversion of the clergy from the evils of incontinence and even more from simony.⁵³

Innumerable laws were passed to control every department of life in the Church. To ease this control a list of permissions was drawn up, which were the prerogative of the pope, and they were granted parsimoniously on application first to bishops and then to the clergy and laity. 'The most unkindest cut' of all was the overall control, by laws and rubrics, of community worship. Prayer, a communing with God, had to be often done in stereotyped formulas and it did not seem to matter at all even if these formulas were irrelevant or in an unknown language or of ancient make, as if God were at the beck and call of men, and our relationship to Him could be regimented! What if thereby the Spirit was quenched and the finer feelings of the heart were extinguished!!!

We know what a mess the Church in the West was in during the Middle Ages and hence a reform movement was started by Pope Leo IX. It was continued by Popes Gregory VII, Innocent III, Innocent IV and Boniface VIII. To prevent too much meddling with the Church by secular rulers, Pope Gregory claimed to have supreme power not only over the Church but also over empires and kingdoms. He summoned theologians to find support from the Bible for his standpoint. They were ready with texts like Jer. 1:10 ("Look, today I am setting you over nations, and over kingdoms, to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant"), I Cor 2:15 and 6:3 ("A spiritual man is able to judge the value of every thing but is not himself subject to judgement by his fellow-men"; "Are you not aware that we are to judge angels? How much more matters of everyday life?").⁵⁴ The pope had more than enough 'tools' to build up a theological platform from which to assert his secular authority. Whether it was all done knowingly or unknowingly, it was not God's word, in

53. see my article "Should the Church be poor?" in *Jeevadhara* 16, p. 333 - 334.

54. cf. Y. Congar, o. c. pp. 59-62.

those days, but *magisterium's* that formed the norms of theological investigations.

Most of us must have heard of 'blind obedience'. It has been the bane of freedom in the Church and the cause of abject slavery. There have been other principles of spirituality followed by priests and religious. Obedience to the pastors of the Church and heads of religious communities - which is not necessarily obedience to God - has been extolled as the greatest of virtues. Hence there has been another principle, viz. that the least wish of those in authority should be followed up. Often this amounted to making people slaves, not by choice but under necessity. This has been a death-blow to all freedom and responsibility. To crown it all, people were told that even if one had gone wrong by acting upon the advice of those in authority, one would not be held responsible before God. Thus God was also called in as false testimony. The Gosepl statement: "Whoever listens to you listens to me"⁵⁵ was sometimes carried to the extent of identifying man's choices with God's will and those in authority decided that they did not have to give reasons for their commands, and drew a veil of secrecy over every thing.

(b) Oriental

What is said here applies to Oriental Churches in general, though everything may not be true of each individual Church.

Christianity had its origin in the Orient and at first it flourished there and Jerusalem was the venue of the first Council of the Church. The first seven ecumenical Councils also were held in the East. From the beginning Christianity spread as much to the West and for the first three centuries the history of the Church could be treated as a single whole. But already from the fourth, divergences began to appear. It was but inevitable. As East and West were culturally, racially and politically different, the differences naturally reflected more and more in their self-awareness, theologies, ministries, liturgies, discipline and life-style.

55. Lk 10:16.

Oriental's perspective of authority followed their vision of the Church. Two basic points in their conception of the Church are: first, that it is a Spirit-filled, pneumatic community and has a charismatic structure and that the economy of the Spirit is its characteristic feature; secondly, that it is a communion of individual Churches which are not mere parts constituting a whole, but each of them is wholly the Church though not the whole Church, each a realization of the Church in a particular culture and socio-religious and political situation with its own thought-patterns, forms of worship, spirituality and discipline.

In this conception of the Church authority is spiritual; it is a ministry (*diakonia*), not domination (*exousia*). Eusebius of Caesarea's view of authority in the Church may be typical of the oriental perspective: He says: "The source of all authority in the universe, both religious and secular, is God. The Divine Logos, that is Christ, is the supreme priest and king on earth, uniting in himself both *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. When Christ left the world the power was divided into two spheres, the spiritual being assigned to his apostles..."⁵⁶ This does not mean that the Oriental Churches always kept the ideal untarnished. There have been struggles also among them for the first place or for the next.

The source of authority for the Orientals seems to derive from the *sacrament* (while for the West from juridical election, investiture and assumption of office), and there has been a constant osmosis among the three functions of the ministry: teaching, sanctification and pastoral care, all of which maintain a certain tension within a single mission. This cannot be obtained where there is a sharp distinction between the power of jurisdiction and the power of order (sacrament). Closely akin to their ecclesiology of communion, the Orientals stress the community aspect of the Church: it is the whole Church that succeeds the Apostles. Johannes Remmers says: "The Whole Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit built on the foundation of the apostles. The whole Church is the new People of God, gathered together by the apostles through their preaching of Christ's Gospel. The whole Church is the body of Christ, held together by the service

56. quoted in *Diakonia* Vol. 12, No. 1, 1977, p. 59

of the apostles. Thus the authorized mission of the apostles has passed on to the Church which they gathered together, and their authorized service has passed over to the Church which they themselves served. The Church is the obedient successor of the apostles⁵⁷. They also uphold the autonomy in their own right, of the individual Churches. No other Church may encroach upon it.

Adherence to rules and regulations and all ancient traditions is perhaps more conspicuous among the Orientals, which might possibly be a reaction against encroachments on their rights by the West. But 'obligation under mortal or venial sin' in the West seems to have no parallel in the East. The conception of the latter is more conformable to the love-life that should be so characteristic of the Christian.

Conclusion

To sum up, Jesus' warning not to lord it over, but to serve is directed to the whole Church both Eastern and Western. The Spirit of domination is so tenacious of life that those who are called to be ministers may awake the next morning as masters (ay, princes and kings) as they see themselves often surrounded by slavish men and stately splendour that induce such an attitude. Then we the Church have to confess in public that pharisaism has come to stay with us in its multifarious expressions. To be true to the nature of the fraternity of the Church whose essential characteristic is freedom, laws should be determinations of the Church community and not 'burdens laid on the shoulders'⁵⁸ of the people by a few men. We must also confess that in East and West there has been too much regimentation in the liturgies for the 'worship of the Father in Spirit and truth'⁵⁹.

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57. quoted ib. p. 63

58. Mt 23:4

59. Jn 4:23

Jerusalem or Rome ?

Towards an interpretation of the historical imbroglio of Christianity

I. Introduction

The established Church structure which is here for investigation and evaluation has its historical roots and it would seem that many of the problems are related to the fact that we have a particular type of historical organization, originated from *Imperium Romanum* and its value systems. When St Paul boasted that he was a Roman citizen¹, he had in mind the idea that he had in consequence legal and institutional advantages.

When we try to explain the life of the Church in an historical context, we have in mind the interrelatedness of religion and ethics². Both are so intimately connected that when the ethical patterns (in the large sense of political, social and cultural behaviour) of a religion is under attack, the religious tenets themselves demand re-interpretation. Historical re-interpretation is needed to test the credibility and authenticity of the Christian message. Often, practical equation of the Gospel of

1. Cf. *Acts* ch. 22.

2. Religion, derived from the Latin word 'Religio' - re-ligare, to bind again or re-eligare - to elect again (Cf. J. Kattackal, *Religion and Ethics in Advaita* (Freiburg: Herder, 1980, p. 4) includes an idea of reinstatement of restoration. This implies that there was an initial binding together, an original relation in the very being of man, a network of cosmic elements. Man is primitively and fundamentally bound to other than himself - a transcendence, ultimately to a Transcendence. This initial binding together between man and Transcendence can be termed Religious principle. This initial and primordial relationship began to be expressed in course of human history through various modes. These particular modes are nothing but particular historical manifestations of human conditions, which need constant interpretations.

Jerusalem and Law of Rome is taken for granted; the expression of juridical view is the expression of the Good News; the knowledge of what is promulgated is the knowledge of what is revealed; the geographical expansion of the *Ecclesia latina* in the world is the expansion of the Kingdom of God on earth!! A close examination of the established religious principle does not allow such an easy identification and serious ecclesiological analysis exposes the imperialistic and sadistic character of these pretensions.

Why do we need re-thinking about the way in which Church has conducted herself in history? The invitation extended by God to share in His life is not to the individuals in an isolated way, but to mankind collectively. Along with this characteristic of the divine plan of salvation, we have to take note of the development of the Church in history. Ecclesial life is to be considered the external manifestation of the transformation that takes place in man as the result of his self-commitment to God. If and when the Church fails to show this, its members fail to bear witness to the Lord. I want therefore to draw attention, first, to a few features of the development of the Church in history and, then, to an evaluation of the state of affairs with regard to this development.

II. Domination of the Spirit

The picture of the early Church is a perennial light into the essence of the Church and its realization in the world. This is the picture of the Church of Jerusalem which the *Acts* of the Apostles depicts us clearly. The universal aspect of the kingdom of God manifests slowly, with the sociological expansion from the tiny Jewish community to the vast gentile sphere. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit legitimates the leadership: "... you will receive power when Holy Spirit comes on you and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth".³ The presence of the Holy Spirit was evident in all ranks of the early Church. The entire Christian community was united with their leaders, the Apostles. Their authority was service. After the death of the Apostles "the Episkopoi led the Christian

3. *Acts* 1:8; also 8:1; 10:44; 4:8.

community. The disciples like Mark, Silas, Timothy and Titus can be called the link between the Episkopoi and the monarchical bishops of the second century. They had special powers from the Apostles to ordain presbyters and bishops and to found new Christian communities".⁴

In the early centuries "in place of the claims of superiority, authority and juridical rights, there was greater concerns for maintaining the Lordship of Christ. God is the Lord of all and he gives his gifts to all as he wills. The ministers are only the stewards of the mysteries of Christ".⁵ The way bishops worked is seen in the words of St Cyprian: "I have made it a rule, ever since the beginning of my episcopate, to make no decision merely on the strength of my own personal opinion without consulting you (the priests and deacons), without the approbation of the people".⁶

III. Domination of the world

History has its own laws of development and decadence. The domination of Spirit has become eclipsed by the domination of the World. The decisive step towards power and *saeculum* occurred in the fourth century after Christ, under the rule of Emperor Constantine the Great. To be precise, the year A. D 313 saw the tragic blow: Edict of Milan. "(1) it granted toleration and positive encouragement as a civic virtue to everyone, especially Christians, to practise whatever religion he desired; (2) it provided for the return to the Church and to individual Christians of property confiscated from them, with the state treasury in some cases compensating illegal possessors; (3) it is worded in such vague phrases that it does not clearly reveal the religious preferences of its authors". Whatever be the vagueness of the version of this Edict, its historical role has become very clear: to make

4. X. Koodapuzha, "The Structural evolution in the Church", *Jeevadharma* 4 (July-Aug. 1971), p. 318.

5. *Ibid.*

6. St. Cyprian, Ep. 14: 4, quoted in X. Koodapuzha, *art. cit.*, p. 318-19.

7. T. P. Neill and R. H. Schmandt, *History of the Catholic Church* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), p. 43.

Church an official religion of the Roman Empire. This is a decisive sociological change. The political titles became religious titles; the political 'pontifex maximus' has changed into the religious 'pontifex Maximus'. More than that, the entire strata of the people of God slipped into the hands of the imperial favours. Congar therefore says: "The clergy were given important privileges, the bishops became *illustri*, and for all practical purposes, ranked with the senators. They were invested with public authority within the framework of the Empire, even in the sphere of the secular life of the cities... The bishops frequently called on the imperial authority for support... Under these circumstances, we ought perhaps to expect that authority would change its character and that it would acquire a more secular, much more juridical meaning, based simply on the relation of superior to subordinate"⁸.

One of the signs of the fall of religion into the secular hands is the organization of the Church and its government along the lines of the organizations of the Empire, "During the fourth century the structure of the Church's government assumed definite shape. When the general Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople legislated concerning organizational matters, more often than not they were only confirming established custom, not prescribing innovations. The main features of administrative organization appeared spontaneously and were conveniently modelled along the lines established for the Roman civil administration by Diocletian and the reforming emperors"⁹. It is to be noted that "the hierarchical organization, or the groupings of bishoprics into provinces under metropolitans, and still higher dignitaries had its beginning in the Roman Empire"¹⁰. In this process, Jerusalem, the city of Gospel, began to lose its religious significance. "Since ecclesiastical provinces in their groupings generally coincided

8. Y. Congar, "Historical Development of Authority", in J. M. Todd (ed.), *Problems of Authority* (London: 1964), p. 126, quoted in X. Koodapuzha, *art. cit.*, p. 319-20.

9. T. P. Neill and R. H. Schmandt, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

10. Placid J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the Church of the Thomas Christians* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute Publications, 1979), p. 10. For detailed ideas on ecclesiastical government and organization of territorial jurisdiction, see T. P. Neill and R. H. Schmandt, *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff.

with civil provinces, the important city of a civil province became also the Metropolis. i. e. the seat or see of the Metropolitan of the corresponding ecclesiastical province with the bishops of that province as his suffragans. Many such cities were already the seats or sees of bishops who by virtue of the groupings in question became Metropolitans- This made Churches of greater ecclesiastical importance subordinated to Churches of lesser ecclesiastical importance. We have, v. g. the case of the Church of Jerusalem. Though the Church of Jerusalem was ecclesiastically very important, still, it was subordinated to the Church of Caesarea which had not any such importance. Therefore in order to honour the Church of Jerusalem, the Council of Nicaea of 325 gave its Prelate precedence over the Metropolitan of Caesarea though the subordination mentioned above, was not abolished. Jerusalem fought for its autonomy and obtained it after some years"¹¹.

Papal states: the culmination of the politicisation of power

For more than thousand years (from A. D. 754 to A. D. 1870) the bishop of Rome was the religious ruler of the universal Church and the secular ruler of the papal states. Within the papal states or the so-called patrimony of St Peter, "the pope's power was the equivalent of that of a king within his kingdom: he possessed sovereign authority in all secular matters. This situation developed imperceptibly without deliberate forethought over a period of two centuries. Four factors contributed significantly: (1) the Lombard wars (2) the weakness of the Byzantine Empire (3) various religious disputes, especially that known as iconoclasm (4) the alliance between the papacy and the Franks"¹².

Gifts and forced gifts added to the power of the bishop of Rome: "Constantine's own generosity and the donations of wealthy Romans built the Patrimony into considerable holdings in the vicinity of Rome, with the northern Italy, Dalmatia, southern Italy and Sicily. The Church became in fact the largest landholder in Italy. From the Patrimony, either farmed by papal stewards or leased to tenants the popes drew revenues for ecclesiastical administration, construction and maintenance of build-

11. Placid J. Podipara, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

12. T. P. Neill and R. H. Schwandt, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

ings, charity, defence and a multitude of other necessities".¹³ The more states added to the papal states, the more became the power of the bishop of Rome, seeing himself not only as a king of kings but also as a king-maker. The purely religious power has been transformed into a real secular power. "The Christianity of the Western World, as it developed historically from Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages, was defined and conditioned by three factors: (1) *imperium*, the political; (2) *studium*, the intellectual; and (3) *sacerdotium*, the sacral. The coalescence of this triad whose essential roots were in *Germania*, *Gallia* and *Italia*, created Christendom, the unified Christian society of the West... A parallel cultural concept derived from the conviction that *Christianitas* descended from 'three cities', from Jerusalem, the city of revelation; from Athens, the city of wisdom; and from Rome, the city of law; and that by destiny it preserved and transmitted this priceless heritage — the Gospel of Christ, the philosophy of Greeks and the jurisprudence of the Roman".¹⁴

This *Christianitas* which is the result of the domination of world made the Church forget many of the subjects which are central to her message. It is to be noted that the imperial power conditioned even the linguistic behaviour of the Church authorities. This curious development of the linguistic behaviour needs historical and hermeneutical research in order to see whether it was only a forgetting of the *terms*, such as 'human rights', or of the *fact*, eg. of 'human rights', in the Church.¹⁵ The much

13. T. P. Neill and R. H. Schmandt, *op cit.*, p. 134.

14. R. E. McNally, "The Old Irish Church and Romanization", in J. Vellian (ed.), *The Romanization Tendency* (Kottayam: 1975), p. 2.

15. There were cases in which catholic hierarchy moved against the movement for the realization of human rights. For example, its views against the Declaration of 1789, saying that it is a work of the devil, not of the Gospel (Cf. Pius VI's *Quod Aliquantum* of 1791). The imperial power of the established Church simply could not understand the philosophical development of human ideas and life. Historically speaking, the French (1789) and American (1776) declarations were the result of a long process of philosophical maturation, begun from *Magna Carta* (1215), *Habeas Corpus & Act* (1679), *Bill of Rights* (1689), etc.

meaningful term 'human rights' seems to be absent from most of the official documents from Rome. Pius XII had made only slightest reference to the Declaration of human rights by the United Nations in 1948. Although the idea of human rights is implicit in natural rights which Leo XIII advocated in *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pius XI followed it in his *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), it is only Pope John who in *Pacem in Terris* (1963) made an attempt to change this 'sacred' tradition of oblivion!! He had the courage to call the declaration on human rights "an act of the greatest importance" numbering it among "the signs of the times" (Cf. *Pacem in Terris*, nos. 143, 142). Therefore, *Pacem in Terris* is the first declaration on human rights by papal authority. Vatican II took up the theme of 'jura hominum' in its documents. It was Pope Paul VI who first used the term human rights (cf. his New Year Address 1969)¹⁶.

Protestant revolt: end of an illusion

Protestant revolt has its roots in the deeper layers of Church life than in the apparent cause: indulgence controversy. The menace to the very essence of Christianity has begun in A. D. 313. The year 1517 was only a culmination of a long process of decadence of the official Church. The corruption and abuses¹⁷ of all sorts were at the heart of Church organization all throughout the era of the political papacy — the dark age of Christianity.

One of the main salutary results of the protestant revolt was the movement of actual efforts for reforming the Church. The so-called catholic reform had started long before Martin Luther posted his theses. Even before 1517 the need for reform in the Church was felt from head to foot but nobody dared to touch the real matter. Need for reform remained for long a wishful thinking, a dream unfulfilled, afflicting incomparable pain in the hearts of so many authentic Christians who

16. For human rights, see T. Velliamthadam, *Man and Social Problems* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute Publications, 1977), pp. 32-43.

17. See L. F. Neill and R. H. Schmandt, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-99. For the explanation of the causes of protestant revolt, see *ibid.*, pp. 303-22.

loved the Church of Jesus Christ who proclaimed the message of salvation from Jerusalem.

IV. Papacy: unity and fellowship

Let me pose a few questions. Is the power and authority of pope spiritual or political? Does he need vast temporal possessions and secular diplomatic corps? Should the laws of the imperium Romanum be the laws of the Church? How far is the talk about the separation of Church and State, begun by Leo XIII, realized? It would be appropriate to reflect upon the historical facts in order to make certain fundamental issues in the Church more explicit. Speaking about the role of papacy, Vatican II stresses the idea that Pope 'takes the place of God', that is, he represents Christ. "Full authority of God has been given to me, both in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). The authority of God is truly vertical. God is found at an infinite height and his omnipotence rules us entirely. Nevertheless, by incarnation the Son of God has broken through the infinite distance which separates divinity from humanity, placing God on a level with man. To exercise an influence on the human community, he willed to act as a member of this community. In him, the most absolute verticality has become the most astonishing horizontality. Thus the Christian community is "a true family gathered together in the Lord's name".¹⁸ In this community, the pope exercises "supreme, full, and immediate power over the universal Church".¹⁹

In order to be coherent, the community should be a structured community. As a visible community, it has got a structure. The word structure is closely linked to *form*, and so to *function*.²⁰ These words are central to the Greek philosophy, especially to Plato and Aristotle. Not only philosophy makes use of these notions, but also it is quite natural to the human mind to seek to reduce the multiplicity of the given to a unity, and the most generic notion of form (or order) is precisely that

18. *Perfectae Caritatis*, § 15.

19. *Christus Dominus*, § 9.

20. Cf. T. Vellilamthadam, "Structural Analysis in Theological Interpretation", *Indian Ecclesiastical Studies*, 9: 2 (1970), pp. 103-113.

of the unity of a multiplicity. Even the smallest substances possess a definite structure. From the very ancient times, the process of knowing has become thoroughly formal. Logic has always investigated the structure of thought and sciences today tend to an even higher degree of formalization. Gestalt psychology has drawn attention to the structured totalities perceived in sensation.

Papacy should be seen as a unifying element in a structure, that is, community. Throughout the history of the Church, it was, is and will be a principle of unity, a sign of visible unity as Christ wanted. Even if some historical variations occur it is only a part of human history. May I propose three elements in order to understand the role of papacy.

a) I may be allowed to distinguish what can be called the principle of papacy and the use of the principle of papacy. By the latter is meant the anthropological and psychological aspects of the exercise of papacy, as expressed in individual popes. The principle of papacy should be viewed as distinct from the use of the principle of papacy which is subject to observation and is subordinate of the principle of unity.

b) One may then consider the changes worked by time in the system of papacy (aspect of *diachrony*), but these changes will always be secondary in relation to the inner structure of the system (aspect of *synchrony*) which remains the basic frame of reference for the determination of its significance. Behind every process we find a system, since change is from one system to another.

c) Within the system no term must be seen as absolute. All the terms are linked by the relationships of mutual dependence. From this it follows that no term in isolation can be considered as significant. Every term derives its significance from its relation (basically opposition and negation) to other terms in the system.

New light can be shed in this perspective. "For the nurturing and constant growth of the people of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which,

work for the good of the whole body... so that all who the people of God ... can work toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, and arrive at salvation".²¹ Papacy is seen as a "permanent, visible source and foundation of unity of faith and fellowship"²², in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided. In this collegiality works the apostolic college but "the college or body of bishops has no authority unless it is simultaneously conceived of in terms of its head... and without any lessening of his power of primacy over all, pastors as well as the general faithful".²³ From these sources it is clear that the Pope rules as a principle of unity and a principle of fellowship. The former is seen in the teaching especially directed to Catholics (eg. *Humani Generis*). The principle of fellowship is exercised now in a wider universal context embracing all men. Encyclicals *Pacem in Terris* of Pope John XXIII and *Populorum Progressio* of Pope Paul VI are addressed to all men of good will.²⁴

These two principles make apostolicity and continuity of the role of papacy and authority a workable realization in modern epoch. In them we see the *Ecclesia docens*, in which *disciplina* and *amor* join together. One must adhere to what has been taught *ubique* and *semper* and has been accepted *ab omnibus*. *Predicare, gubernare, sanctificare* are essential parts of the structuring aspect of *Ecclesia docens* and as such they eminently belong to the *Pontifex Maximus*. He is the bridge-builder, that is, one who joins the different ecclesial traditions which have flourished both in the West and in the East. In this perspective, there is no domination of the Latin Churches over the Oriental Churches and vice versa. And the Pope is no more the victim of the imperial type *Pontifex Maximus* of the ages of domination of the world. He is a follower of Christ, building bridges (*pontifex*) between the people of God.

21. *Lumen Gentium*, § 18.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Lumen Gentium*, § 22.

24. Cf. T. Vellilamthadam, "Social Doctrine or Social Praxis?", *Jeevadhara* 52 (July-August 1979), pp. 312-18.

V. Return to Jerusalem

In order to realize the original intent of Christ we have to go back to Jerusalem which is the original place of Truth and Light. For that, the deviation made 'via Roma' should be corrected, because

a) it is Rome that has abused the essence of Christianity, that has made authentic religious principle into established religious principle with temporal prerogative, kingly power and imperial privileges, spoiling the very essence of the religious principle: the Transcendence — submission to the Transcendent Power;

b) it is Rome that has divided Christianity through arrogance, temporal power, innumerable schisms and divisions in the Christianity, especially in the Western hemisphere:

c) it is Rome that caused Latin domination inside the Church. The infiltration of Latin Catholicity, originated and developed under the domination of the world begun in A. D. 313, into the 'catholic' Church caused incurable cancer in the mystical body of Christ. This infiltration "is quite evident on the part of Rome with the creation of new Latin Patriarchates in the East. The creation of more than one Patriarch in the same rite was entirely against the venerable traditions of the first millennium. The new political situation in the West gave greater importance to the monarchical titles and prerogatives of the Pope, and the ancient Patriarchal title which was dear to the Eastern Churches became less attractive to the West ... This innovation changed the traditional conception of the Patriarchal dignity and of the administrative structures centred on the Patriarch as the leader of a rite or a particular Church ... The Ecumenical Councils which used to be convoked in the East during the first millennium began to be held in West. In these Councils the Eastern Churches were not properly represented, and the decisions reflect more the western point of view ... The creation of more than one Patriarch in the same rite narrowed down the importance of their role and paved the way for their dependence on the Roman Curia which was slowly taking shape. The practical autonomy and individuality of the ancient Eastern Churches, symbolized the Patriarchal leadership, were conceived by Rome

as privileges granted by the Pope. Rome was increasingly becoming the administrative centre of the whole Church, which did not leave much room for the autonomy of the local Churches"²⁵.

Moreover, "Some of the Eastern Churches which had direct and closer relations with Rome have almost lost their identity as a result of the strong latinizing policy followed by westerners. Their liturgy, spiritual heritage, theology, discipline and even their spiritual practices are being westernized. This was the unopposed process in the last few centuries! ... The history of the ancient Eastern Church in India is a typical example in this connexion. This Church was deeply rooted in the Indian cultural soil and had a particular administrative system with active participation of the laity ... They called their traditions the 'Law of Thomas the Apostle' as he was the founder of their Church. But with the coming of the missionaries from the West there began a constant attempt to suppress the Eastern traditions and adapt them to western practices. The Portuguese succeeded in influencing Rome, and their Padroado was extended over these Christians. Bishops of Latin rite were appointed to govern these Oriental Christians, and did so from 1599 to 1896, a long period of nearly three centuries. Their lawful resistance to preserve their own ancient traditions was branded as schism and lack of loyalty; The ancient Christian community in India, which was of the same rite and faith till the coming of the foreign missionaries, was split into different denominations during the three hundred years of Latin rule! Though the indigenous hierarchy was partly restored a few decades ago the re-establishment of the Eastern identity is by no means an easy process"²⁶. In a recent work Placid J. Podipara reiterates the

25. X. Koodapuzha, *art. cit.*, pp., 326-27.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 329-30. Only in recent times, a little sign of good will is seen in Roman authorities to recognize the local Churches. For example, Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) (section 4) admits that "situations vary so much that we find it difficult to say just the one right thing as to offer a solution of universal validity ... It is the business of particular Christian communities to analyse the situation of their own country as objectively as possible, to discern the issues and to take the measures that are appropriate".

same idea: "From the beginning of the 16th century the Portuguese began to exercise their power in India. They baptized several thousands of non-Christians in the Latin rite. Cochin in Malabar, and Goa, outside Malabar, were their politico-ecclesiastical centres. Goa became a bishopric in 1534 and a Metropolis in 1558 with Cochin as its suffragan see erected in the same year. Both these sees were under Padroado (=Patronage) of the Portuguese crown. With certain obligations the Portuguese crown had the privilege to nominate Prelates to these sees. For the Portuguese in general the ideal of a true Catholic was to be of the Latin rite. The *Padroado* was their idol. They, therefore, tried any means, even illegal and unjust, to latinize the Thomas Christians and to reduce them under their Padroado jurisdiction"²⁷.

d) To return from Rome again means to get rid of the outmoded customs and values of the so-called Latin civilization, which has its origin in the ancient Rome. Its economy was based on latifundia (vast rural estates) and on the families. These families who dwelt on those vast lands were capable of feeding their many members. The members lived under the absolute authority of the paterfamilias (the patriarch) who was responsible for the welfare of all (eg. wife, children, uncles, grandparents, cousins, servants and even slaves). In this type of families, individual members felt safe and protected. He knew his duties well and got satisfaction in fulfilling the prescribed duties. He was in turn bound to a despotic submission to the authority. But in the modern era with rapid sociological change, the patriarchal and joint-family systems are destined to die out. In the modern social set up family has to break up when the children reach adulthood. They seek partners, marry and begin a nucleus family and set out in search of a new land or a new job, which allow them to settle independently. The couple in this process of liberation go through many hardships, yet they are sure to gain the financial, social, cultural and religious independence. In this new set up, it is no more the blood ties that determine behavioural patterns. These new types of men do not find Latin type religious principle adequate nor attractive. They no longer wish to be crushed by the powerful Roman

27. Placid J. Podipara, *op. cit.*, p. 23

type administrative religion or by an antiquated and irrelevant 'heritage', but to be consoled by the Jerusalem type voice which is humble and powerless.

Christianity is an Eastern religion and has to be in its Eastern elements if it has to be what it should be. It has to go back to its source in Jerusalem and not to the imperial city of Rome. Rome means western domination, being, exploitation and abolition of nature, decline of the Absolutes. Jerusalem on the contrary does mean oriental hospitality and spirituality, welcome, respect, receptivity, openness to the nature. To search Christ in the western hemisphere is a wasting of time; it is a *Holzwege*, as the philosopher Heidegger would say; it is a wandering in the woods, that would lead us nowhere. That is why the Christian leaders must go to the ancient Jerusalem,²⁸ not to the western Roman Capital. An 'Ashram' in Jerusalem will do more good to understand the *Good News* of the Lord than many splendid institutions in Rome. The *Voice* of Jerusalem, is the salvific Word.

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28. Cf. Lk 24:52-53.

Book Reviews

Jon Sobrino S. J., *Christology at the Crossroads, A Latin American Approach*, trs. John Drury, Maryknoll, N. Y. Orbis, 1978 pp. xxvi, 432. Paperback \$ 12.95

The focus of Liberation Theology is Christology, not the dogmatic Christology of Ephesus and Chalcedon, but the humanistic Christology of the Synoptic Gospels. The Latin Americans "regard the historical Jesus as the most satisfactory theological focus for all the different themes in liberation theology", says Jon Sobrino s. j., the author of the book (p. 274.) As distinct from the N. T. writings of St. John and St. Paul, the Synoptic Gospels present a human Christ, who identifies himself with the suffering masses, fights against legalism and oppression, which constitute the situation of sin. Jon Sobrino, born in Barcelona, Spain, into a Basque family, earned his Master's degree in mechanical engineering at St. Louis University and a doctorate in theology at Frankfurt, W. Germany. His monumental work *Cristologia desde america latina* translated and published now in English, shows how the liberation struggle in Latin American countries today is rooted in the life and activity of Jesus Christ as presented to us in the history of the Gospels.

The starting point of this Christology is not the traditional one of the one divine person of Christ in two natures, defined in the Council of Chalcedon. It was a "descending Christology", the Christology of the Son of God descending to man, deeply rooted in the Greek epiphanic understanding of God. Nor is it the traditional biblical approach of discovering the distinctive character of Christ through the different titles applied to him in N. T. writings. Sobrino does not begin the discussion of Christ from the people's experience of Christ in worship, either, since it can be very subjective; nor does he start from the preaching of the Church about Christ, since such preaching is often conditioned by particular situations and needs. He focuses on the historical Christ as a sort of mid-point between mere

abstract speculation of the armchair theologian, and the ideological instrumentalization of Christ by the revolutionary (p. 10). Since Salvation History is intimately linked with salvation in history the focus must be on the historical logos, lest the logos remains purely speculative and idealistic. The New Testament has in fact several Christologies; but they are not pre-fabricated, but are based on the concrete testimony of the people who claimed to have seen the Risen Lord. They are elaborated from two poles, the historical reality of Jesus of Nazareth and the concrete situation of each community.

The very logic of this christology is historical, because, its end is to profess that Jesus is the Christ, and its starting point is the affirmation that this Christ is the Jesus of history, the very source and mainstay of later dogmatic elaborations. Its categories too have to be historical giving preference to the praxis of Jesus in his struggle with sin, over his verbal preaching itself. Such a christology has to be relational since Christ does not present himself as an absolute, but focuses his preaching and activity on the coming kingdom of God. This Christology is also ecclesial not merely because the different N. T. Christian communities took over the reality of Christ in different ways and forms, nor because they all go back to Christ to explain themselves, but primarily because Christ is conceived on the basis of the concrete life and meaning of the community. Even today Christology must reflect and foster the life and praxis of the Christian communities, give them meaningfulness. The dogmatic definitions of councils and of the papal magisterium was only an extension of this ecclesial sense. Paradoxically this Christology is also Trinitarian, not in the abstract theoretical sense, but in concrete since Christ cannot be thought of except in relation to his Father and His Kingdom, and since we can draw near to the Father in Jesus Christ only if we live in the Spirit.

It is the basic connection between the radical historicity of Jesus and the suffering and pain of oppressed peoples that brings traditional abstract, dogmatic, transcendental Christology to the crossroads of history. It can ignore the reality of the life of the people today and escape into a world of models, ideas, nature, person, hypostasis and the like, or discover Christ

in the historical situation of oppressed people today. Sobrino's book is a real landmark pointing out the path the theologian of the Third World has to take today.

Hence the discussion of Christ in the book is not centered around the divinity of Christ, his human nature and divine personality and the hypostatic union of the two natures as traditional Christology manuals have it, but on Christ's service of the Kingdom, his faith, his prayer, and his death by crucifixion. Christ did not preach about himself or even simply about God, but rather about the Kingdom of God. His divinity comes in only relationally, "as the one who is the way to the Father... accessible to others in so far as they are willing to follow the same course" (pp. 60-61). It is Jesus himself who gives a life of unlimited faith (*Mk* 9, 23), initiates the faith of the wayfaring Church and brings it to perfection (*Heb.* 12, 3) (pp. 88-89). Since Jesus' morality was historically situated, the Christian discipleship is not merely imitating Christ, which is practically impossible, or reproducing certain historical traits of Jesus, but being "open to the work of reproducing the fundamental thrust of Jesus' effort to concretize certain generic values." (p. 133). Jesus' prayer was not a mechanism for narcissism and self-gratification, nor an attempt to get the reputation of being just through public religious acts, all of which he explicitly condemns, but rather consisted in seeking out the Father's will, in his joy at the approach of the Kingdom, in his unconditional confidence in the Father and the acceptance of the Father's will. (p. 157)

According to Sobrino, in the history of the Church there has been a tendency to bypass the scandal of the Cross of Christ, an idea of cultic sacrifice somewhat unrelated to Jesus. The relation between Jesus' death and salvation was viewed as if from the outside, in terms of God's overall design and speculatively in terms of God's offended dignity. On the other hand, in the spirit of the Gospel, the Cross must be taken as "the outcome of an incarnation situated in a world of sin that is revealed to be a power working against the God of Jesus," (p. 202). "By immersing himself in this situation, Jesus necessarily introduced conflict into the heart of his life." (p. 207). His God is not the abstract, transcendent God of religion, but the

Father, "who serves as the basis for a completely new kind of human existence." (p. 209). "Over against the notion of God as power, Jesus sets the notion of God as love." (p. 214). Since the Cross is the historical path of Jesus, christian spirituality should not be reduced to a certain mystique of the cross, but should consist in following the path of Jesus. (p. 215). In this context, the resurrection of Christ should not be taken as a mere myth a simple miracle that manifests the power of God, but rather as the active presence of God over against his absence from the Son on the cross, "a journey toward God the Father that takes seriously both aspects of the paschal mystery." (p. 231). Christian love "draws its life from the dialectical interplay between love and alienation" (p. 233).

The great merit of Sobrino's Christology is that it is faithful both to the New Testament message of the Synoptic Gospels and also to the social context of Latin America. Perhaps, that is also its most serious problem. The similarity between the concrete social situation in which the Synoptic Gospels were written and the situation of Latin America today creates a tendency to take a narrow view of Christian theological thought, and to universalize what is particularly relevant to Latin America. The Latin American situation is historically, culturally and sociologically unique, and it cannot be generalized to embrace even the rest of the Third World. Even in the New Testament St John, St Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had to take a more universal, transcendental and mystical view of the person; life and work of Christ than that of the Synoptics. St Paul found the focus of his Christology in the person of Jesus Christ who appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and that is Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and for ever. One's immersion with Christ in a particular historical and social situation can be really liberating only if one has the wisdom to raise the eyes to the person of Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life (*Jo.* 14:6), and who manifested to us the kindness and love of God our saviour, and poured out generously on us the Holy Spirit. (*Titus* 3:4-6).

Throughout the book Sobrino opposes the concrete historical approach of Christian faith to the approach of "religion", which means "a conception of the world and humanity, a con-

ception of reality, in which the meaning of the whole is already given at the start because the reality of God is satisfactorily shaped and defined from the very beginning" (p. 275). Perhaps, such a sharp opposition is simplistic. World religions are as concerned with the actual problems of man as Christianity itself, and the transcendental view that is ascribed to 'religions' is a necessary corrective to the narrow local concerns of liberation theology, if this latter should not degenerate into mere social theology. But, Sobrino's Christology, which makes a careful and critical evaluation of other christologies, is a very valuable contribution to theological thinking today both by its unique methodology as well as by the wealth of its insights for Christian spirituality.

J. B. Chethimattam

Alfred T. Hennelly, *Theologies in Conflict, The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo*, Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1979, pp. xxiii, 200 \$ 8.95 Paper.

This is a book on the theological contribution of the Uruguayan liberation theologian Juan Segundo S. J. Alfred T. Hennelly, an American Jesuit got interested in Latin American theology on account of his six years of experience of the Third World, working in the Philippines, where he discovered a certain similarity of concerns of the Third World countries in their common opposition to Americanisation and what is termed as "Coca-colonization", that is imposition on them of the culture, theology and outlook of America and other First World countries. The countries that constitute the "Third Church" today insist that they should theologize from the standpoint of their own historical and geographical reality or situation. In fact the initiatives of Pope John XXIII, Vatican II, the encyclicals of Pope Paul VI, and the recent theological trends like the Secular Theology and Theology of Hope, have created a general situation, in which traditional theologies have become irrelevant, and a response in greater depth is called for.

Hennelly discusses in the first chapter the new frontiers that have emerged in theology in recent times, the emphasis on the human person created by Existentialism and other movements, the trend towards secularization i. e. "the historical process by which human institutions progressively free themselves from the hegemony of sacral or ecclesiastical direction" (p. 4), the new emphasis on history and praxis rather than on abstract theorizing, the renewed attention brought on eschatological perspective and hope, and the development of sociopolitics as a crucial area of theology. He follows this up with a short history of Latin American theology. Liberation theology which alone can be claimed to be uniquely Latin American, has a very short history, coming as it does after a long period of "Colonial Christendom" starting with the conquest and evangelization in 1553 and extending up to the twentieth century, and the "New-Christendom" mentality of the 1930's. Preparation for Liberation Theology started with Vatican II and extended up to the Medellin Conference of 1968. It was formulated between 1968 and 72 and after that had a period of maturation. Gustavo Gutierrez, the pioneer of the whole movement, in his famous work *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), places Christian praxis or "the actual Christian experience of commitment in a given historical situation, under the guidance of the Spirit" as the special and privileged source of Christian theology. He sees the shift in Christian spirituality from an earlier attitude of contempt for and withdrawal from the world to the recent emphasis on active presence in the world and the progressive documents of Vatican II as a springboard for continuing theological development. Since the projects for economic development launched in the Latin American countries in the 1950's and 60's ended up in greater enslavement of the people, Gutierrez states that the answer to the situation is not development, but liberation. Segundo Galilea, a Chilean priest developed the spirituality of liberation theology with the thesis that one cannot be a Christian without being a contemplative, and a contemplative without having the experience of Christ and of his reign in history. For, Christian message is "to create persons evangelically free, and to transform the world into a 'new heaven and new earth.'" Contemplation is not a flight from the world, but an experience of God in all dimensions of human life.

Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian Franciscan in his *Jesus Christ the Liberator* presented a Christology in the liberation perspective: He stresses the anthropological element over the ecclesial, the critical over the dogmatic, the social over the personal, orthopraxis over orthodoxy and shows that the Christian task is to maintain the social process in a permanent opening to transformation in order to create a world "promised and shown to be possible by Jesus Christ." Jon Sobrino, a Basque Jesuit working in Central America followed this line of Christology in his *Christology at the Crossroads*. A number of theologians like Ignacio Ellacuria and Raul Vidales have concentrated their attention on theological method, while others like Jose Porfirio Miranda, J. Severino Croatto and Alfonso Castillo have investigated the Biblical roots of Liberation Theology.

The major contribution of Juan Luis Segundo S. J. is his formulation of a strict method for liberation theology. After taking his licentiate in theology from the University of Louvain in 1956 and doctorate in Letters from the University of Paris in 1963 Segundo founded a Center for social and theological studies at Montevideo in 1965 and started the publication of a monthly called *Perspectivas de Dialogo*. In 1975 the government suppressed the journal and the Jesuit superiors closed down the center. Segundo calls his an "open" theology, since in his method the principles that allow for growth and development take precedence over a systematically organized body of content (p.51). His "hermeneutic circle", a phrase adopted from Rudolf Bultmann, means the dialectics of change in theological interpretation. With regard to the Bible, it means the continuous change in its interpretation in function of the continuous changes in our present reality, both individual and social. This change in theological perspective implies four steps, first an experience of an anomaly or a problem in the present reality that leads to a suspicion regarding the ideology behind it, second, a challenge to the ideological superstructure in general and to the theology in particular, third, a new theological experience that leads to an exegetical suspicion that the Biblical message was wrongly interpreted, and fourth a new hermeneutic or way of interpreting the source of our faith, Scripture, with the new factors at our disposal.

This procedure through ideological suspicion is needed because our present theological ideas and pastoral practices are unconsciously ruled by certain ideologies. Thus the problem of routine and ritualism in the celebration of the Eucharist and of the Sacraments leads one to suspect that the a-historical mentality behind it with the emphasis on the same immutable cycle of feasts, the same actions and texts is motivated by a general ideology "perfectly adapted to the interests of the dominant classes and is one of the most powerful ideological facts in maintaining the status quo". This raises the suspicion that Christian sacramental theology was in fact misinterpreted to support a particular social set up, and in turn leads to a new hermeneutic of the Biblical passages like that of *Heb. 10, 9-14* which show that religious efficacy should not be attributed to every ritual and cult as if grace was not won once and for all in Christ, and that Christian worship should be seen in the context of a Christian community with a keen historical sense facing up to the questions that arise in the present.

This "hermeneutical circle" is applied to every important theological problem by Segundo, though in fact, Segundo formulated the method only after theologizing according to it for about fifteen years. Thus the authentic Christian image of humanity cannot be realized in the stereotype of "Christendom" with its social and religious slavery, but only in the freedom for which Christ has set us free (*Gal. 5, 1*), which is being made manifest in the technological revolution and mass communication which have done away with even the last remnants of Christendom. Similarly, today the missionary effort of the Church is in trouble because it is tied to the old ideology of expanding christendom to embrace the whole world. In the conception of Mission in the tension between the idea of the Church as a small visible community and her cosmic image as embracing all men, Segundo believes that there is no probability that the majority of men will embrace Christian ideals, and that Christianity by its very nature is a minority phenomenon, since it demands an adhesion that is personal, heroic and internalized. As Paul VI explains in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* the task of the Mission is threefold, verbal proclamation of the word, a life of personal witness to the Gospel in Christian fellowship, and the transformation of society through service. According to Segundo

evangelization is primarily the task of the laity, while the priest's important role is to form evangelical communities.

What the writings of authors like Segundo indicate is that Latin American theology has achieved within the short period of a decade stability and maturity. Hennelly gives a comprehensive summary of Segundo's ideas, though he is very careful in handling his Marxist leanings, which creates a spontaneous negative reaction in North American readers. Segundo prefers Marxist sociology principally because it represents the attitude of the Prophets at all times in their strong criticism of the social evils of their times. But the danger of an over-emphasis on methodology, especially when it is motivated by an ideology like Marxism is that it may end up as another system of theology like any other system. In reading books like the theological treatises of Segundo we have to be reminded of Plato's warning: "Whenever we see a book... we can be sure that if the author is really competent, this book does not contain his deepest thoughts. Of if he has committed his ultimate thoughts to writing, it is because men, not the gods have taken his wits away." (*ep.* vii)

J. B. Chethimattam

Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, *Theology of a Classless Society*, Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1980 pp. 159 \$8.95 Paper.

The central theme of the book is that the Christian world vision based on the faith in the Triune God is oriented to a classless society according to the socialist ideals than to a world order structured on feudalism, monarchy, capitalism and mixed economy. One of the basic insights of the Cappadocian Fathers of the Church, according to the author has great social importance, and that is the coequality, co-essentiality, and co-eternity of the divine Persons. This fellowship of the divine Persons in the divine nature has to be realized in society, in the Church and in its ministry. Mar Osthathios voices the plea of Camillo Torres, the Colombian revolutionary priest killed in an ambush by the military, that instead of blindly and uncritically condemn-

ing communism, the Church must work for the good of all mankind by changing the temporal structures. Since, today Christian theology has come of age, it should not support the old life style but must work for collegiality and democracy, an integral interpretation of faith based on Scripture, tradition and experience, open to other religions and ideologies, embracing both the visible and invisible aspects of the church.

In the author's opinion, "today the torch bearers of the theology of a classless society are not theologians, but scientists, economists, politicians, communists, socialists" etc., who know better than ever that the world as a whole and realize how limited the resources of our space-ship are (p. 47). Hence, the Church has to listen to the voice of the modern prophets, educate her members in politics, emphasize the stewardship of earthly goods over against the traditional idea of private property.

The book reads like a series of sermons touching a variety of issues both theological and practical, and the author does not hesitate to state categorically his personal opinion on every one of them. Thus, he does not feel that a classless society should recognize the equality of women with men. According to him sexism cannot be equated with racism, for, "functional equality is not meant for man and woman, though the same is meant for people of different races." He does not seem to recognize that sexism is not mainly about the inequality of functions of male and female, but is rather the discriminatory treatment of women as if they were inferior to men as human beings, and hence as irrational and based on prejudices as contempt for other races or the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist. Similarly the author's claim that the sobornost principle of the Orthodox churches maintains the classlessness and communality of the church better than the hierarchical order in the Roman Catholic Church and the lack of it in congregationalist Protestant churches is open to question, and at best it looks somewhat irrelevant to the discussion.

On the whole the books raises a great many issues for discussion in the ecclesial and social fields, and it is a testimony to the author's world-wide experience and the wide range of his pastoral concerns.

J. B. Chethimattam

